

# The Nation and The Athenæum

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
EVENTS OF THE WEEK ... ..	875	IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY. Poem by Cyprinoid ... ..	888
WANTED—A NAVAL POLICY ... ..	878	THE WORLD OF BOOKS :—	
THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN TO-DAY: THE REAL ISSUE.		The Last Word in Crime. By Leonard Woolf ... ..	889
By John H. Harris ... ..	879	REVIEWS :—	
THE LAST OF THE DEDLOCKS. By Peter Ibbetson ... ..	880	The First Folio. By George Saintsbury ... ..	890
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Article 429 of the Treaty of		The Sirens. By W. A. F. ... ..	890
Versailles (Sir Edward Grigg); Singapore and Japan		Imitations of Human Nature. By Bonamy Dobrée ... ..	891
(John Lloyd Dolbey); Wage and Efficiency (Geo. G.		Fiction. By Edwin Muir ... ..	892
Chisholm); "C.3" (J. Allen Skinner); Birth-Control		The Critic ... ..	892
(A Woman); "Significant Form" (Mark Wardle);		"The Times" ... ..	893
"Poems of Thirty Years" (V. Sackville-West);		A German in France. By F. B. ... ..	893
Giovanni Verga (Orlo Williams); Tolstoy on Art		"Gone Abroad" ... ..	894
(Aylmer Maude) ... ..	881-885	Justifications ... ..	894
LANDMARKS IN MODERN ART. IV.—DELACROIX. By Clive		ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE ... ..	896
Bell ... ..	885	NOVELS IN BRIEF ... ..	896
THE LITTLE GENTLEMAN IN A RED COAT. By Frances Pitt	887	BOOKS IN BRIEF ... ..	896
THE DRAMA :—		FINANCIAL SECTION :—	
"Words, Words, Words!" By Francis Birrell ... ..	888	The Week in the City ... ..	898
FORTHCOMING EVENTS ... ..	888		

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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Government emerged with credit from the debate on Security last Tuesday. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, after defending the action of the Government in rejecting the Protocol, went out of his way to remark that "we propose loyally and faithfully to observe" our existing obligations under the Covenant—a welcome statement, obviously designed to clear up doubts as to whether Britain takes Article 16 seriously. Mr. Chamberlain then turned to the German proposals, declaring that after some initial "suspicion," he is now convinced that "the German Government are making a sincere and honest attempt to lead to a better state of things." He proceeded to give an important account of the present position in regard to these proposals. The French and other Governments concerned have agreed that these proposals cannot "be lightly turned down," but must be examined in a hopeful spirit. They are also agreed that any arrangement that may be reached must be "purely defensive in character, and it should be framed in the spirit of the Covenant, working in close harmony with the League and under its guidance if possible." Our obligations as a guarantor cannot "be extended in respect of every frontier," but this does not mean that we are "licensing or legitimizing war elsewhere," or desire to encourage the reopening of frontier questions. It would be an essential feature of any arrangement that Germany should enter the League "on a footing of equality." Moreover, "no fruitful issue can come" unless the question of German disarmament and the evacuation of Cologne is first cleared up. All these points seem to us well-made. Incidentally, Mr. Chamberlain placed definitely on record the fact that France has been informed that "it is not within the power of a British Government to offer . . . a one-sided pact of guarantee . . . directly pointed against Germany."

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Mr. Chamberlain concluded with a peroration in which a note of restrained passion shot through his conventional style of oratory:—

"Ever since peace was signed, no less than when war was still being waged, Europe has been ranged in

two camps, divided as were the combatants in the war. Fear, haunting, restless, brooding fear, haunts the councils of every nation and the homes of every Continental people, fear that warps the judgment and affects the policy, which leads to irritating acts, to fresh provocations, which renews day by day the offences of the war, the bitterness of the war, the rancours of the war. If this continues, sooner or later Europe will march to a new Armageddon . . . and a generation which has to pay the penalty of that unnecessary war will judge harshly the statesmen of to-day who failed to take in time the measures by which it might be prevented.

"The statesmen of this country have some responsibility. Our policy, not wholly through our own fault, has been wavering and inconsistent. Our influence—nobody can move, as I have done, among the statesmen of Europe and of more than Europe and not feel it—has lost something by our hesitations and our inconsistencies. A new chance is given to us. I see in these proposals the possible dawn of a better day. Without our help nothing will be done . . . with our help the war chapter may be brought to a close and a real triumph of peace may begin. The British Empire, detached from Europe by its Dominions, linked to Europe by these islands, can do what no other nation on the face of the earth can do. . . ."

The spirit which these words reflect is precisely the spirit which, we believe, most liberal-minded people desire should actuate our foreign policy.

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In attaching such significance to proposals coming from Germany, the instinct of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues is, we believe, entirely sound, certainly far sounder than that of those partizans of the Protocol who seem almost to resent the serious consideration of a project which does not emanate from Geneva. We are glad to observe, however, that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has materially modified his attitude, and now gives the attempt to follow up the German proposals a somewhat disparaging blessing. Mr. Lloyd George expressed his "delight" at Mr. Chamberlain's "friendly view" of the German offer; so that it is fair to say that on its positive side the Government's policy has the backing of national opinion. Indeed, we have at last reached a definition of the national attitude towards the problem of security, to which we are likely to adhere steadily and consistently, in contrast to the fluctuations during the last few years which Mr. Chamber-

lain rightly deplores. It is not an attitude of which we have any reason to be ashamed. League enthusiasts who have done so much to make British opinion understand the Continental feeling of insecurity as a fact with which we must reckon, would do well, we think, to give their minds now to making their Continental friends understand the British reluctance to assume further warlike commitments, as a fact with which they must reckon.

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Mr. Lloyd George, while denouncing the Protocol with great zest as a "booby-trap for Britain, baited with arbitration," rebuked the Government for their unfavourable attitude towards compulsory arbitration. We cannot follow Mr. Lloyd George here. Compulsory arbitration of all disputes implies inevitably all the rigid, stereotyping features of the Protocol, since it is quite impossible to imagine that any Power, including ourselves, would agree to a system under which territories might be taken away from it on the mere fiat of an arbitrator. As we argued at length, when the Protocol was first propounded, arbitration, while the right method for settling what are called justiciable disputes, is an inherently absurd method for settling others; and the defects of the Protocol were really rooted in the attempt to extend arbitration beyond its proper sphere. Mr. Baldwin aptly asked the Labour Party, "How many members of the trade unions would sign a Protocol tomorrow for compulsory arbitration in industry?" This was not a mere debating point. The problem of international disputes is far more analogous to that of labour disputes than it is to ordinary civil law; and the history of labour disputes shows very clearly the vital distinction between the methods of conciliation and arbitration, and the mischief that can be done by well-meaning attempts to "supplement" the former by the latter. The next step in developing the League lies, we are firmly convinced, in improving its conciliation procedure as conciliation procedure, *i.e.*, without any attempt to stop up those loop-holes for war left in the Covenant.

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The debate on the Navy Estimates was profoundly disappointing. Opportunities of telling criticism were largely thrown away owing to the divided counsels of the Opposition and their inability to concentrate on vital points, and the Government were allowed to ride off without any revelation of their real naval policy. There were two things that really mattered: to force from the Government a statement as to how far their inquiry into naval construction is related to the proposals for a new conference on the limitation of naval armaments, and to drive home the real implications of the Singapore scheme. The first of these was almost entirely neglected, and we are left in doubt as to whether either the Government or their critics have given any real thought to the difficult, but not insoluble, problem of framing a reasoned statement of British naval needs that could be put forward as a basis for limitation. The attack on Singapore was muddled. Mr. Bridgeman, in his reply, exposed the hopeless weakness of the Government's case by falling back on the preposterous argument that a capital-ship base is needed to protect trade routes against sporadic raiding. Mr. MacDonald, however, was too much concerned to defend his own policy with regard to the Protocol and cruiser construction, to spare time adequately to expose the inconsistencies of the advocates of the scheme, or to drive home conclusively its inevitable reactions on our future building programmes.

Liberal critics were carried away by their desire to hit out on both sides, which led Sir Alfred Mond to class the Labour Government's five cruisers and the Singapore scheme as equally provocative. The necessity or wisdom of replacing obsolescent cruisers is a matter for argument; but, in any event, the new cruisers are of a type likely to be needed for trade defence against any possible opponent. A capital-ship base at Singapore serves no purpose of defensive strategy. It does not protect Dominions thousands of miles away; it is not necessary for protecting trade routes in the Indian Ocean. The scheme is meaningless except as a measure that will enable the fleet to carry war, if necessary, into Japanese waters. The main value of the base is for offensive purposes, and for offensive purposes against one single Power, with whom we were lately in alliance, and with whom we are now joined in the Four Power Pact. To treat the two issues as on all fours is wholly to confuse their nature and importance, and its only effect was to weaken the authority of the attack on Singapore itself, and present Mr. Bridgeman with an inconclusive, but, for debating purposes, an effective reply to Mr. MacDonald.

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The Lord Chancellor made an important announcement in the House of Lords on March 25th. The Prime Minister, he said, intends to appoint a committee of the Cabinet to examine the question of the composition and powers of the House of Lords in the hope that in the near future, possibly next year, they may be in a position to put before Parliament their proposals for dealing with it. The speech in which this announcement was made showed clearly that the Lord Chancellor himself is anxious to amend the Parliament Act, and would only "reform" the House of Lords as a means to this end; and all the other Tory peers who spoke in the debate revealed the same attitude of mind. Lord Oxford seems, indeed, to be the only person who now wants a change in the composition of the Second Chamber for its own sake, and he, we suspect, is influenced to some extent by a desire to stand by his past utterances. Lord Haldane frankly advised the House to "leave well alone," and this seems to us to be the sensible thing to do. For the present arrangement is really most satisfactory. We have a Second Chamber in which Elder Statesmen, eminent lawyers, and other weighty personages can debate national affairs and advise upon legislation, under restrictions which ensure that, in vital matters, the will of the House of Commons shall prevail. The illogical and anomalous composition of the House of Lords makes these desirable restrictions easy to defend and maintain, but once we start "reforming," it will be difficult, as the Tories calculate, to keep it in proper subordination to the Lower House.

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The futile attempt to interpret the result of the Egyptian elections as a victory for the opponents of Zaghloul completely broke down as soon as the new Parliament met. Its first act was to elect Zaghloul as its President by 125 votes to 85. This led to the immediate resignation of Ziwar Pasha's Government, which, however, was refused by the King, who preferred instead to dissolve the new Parliament after it had been in existence only ten hours. A dangerous situation is thus created, for it is obviously improbable that new elections will give an essentially different result unless they are conducted by different methods. It is stated, moreover, that the Government contemplates the introduction of a new electoral law before the elections are held. Does this mean that a *coup d'état* is intended? The ruling powers in Egypt appear to be playing with fire, and it is



important that the British public should know how far the advice of British officials is now influencing domestic policy in Egypt. For it is clear that a difficult situation was immensely complicated by the terms of the British ultimatum last November, and that, although Lord Allenby and Mr. Chamberlain have done their best to undo the worst effects of that hasty and ill-judged document, it is still producing serious reactions. The only hope of peace in Egypt lies, as Sir Valentine Chirol said in his admirable letter to last Wednesday's "Times," in a return by both British and Egyptians to the reasonable methods of negotiation recommended by the Milner Report.

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The Indian minority of the Muddiman Committee ask for a Royal Commission to find an answer to the question "whether the Indian constitution might not now be put on a permanent basis with provisions for automatic progress in the future?" Much has happened since the Minority framed their report, and it is certain that the present Government will not appoint any such Commission. The question now to be answered is whether political India will persevere in its efforts to wreck the reforms or will use them to strengthen its position and extend its influence. Non-co-operation and Council-wrecking commended themselves not to cool heads, but to hearts hot with the flame kindled at Amritsar. Time has cooled the ashes of that fire, and the Indian intellect may be expected soon to reassert itself. Mr. Das still waves in front of the Swarajist ranks the flag of indiscriminate opposition, but the folly of this policy was conspicuously shown when the Assembly voted down the Cotton Excise. Sir Basil Blackett was thus compelled to demand in full the highly unpopular Provincial contributions which he had proposed to reduce. The Provinces did not conceal their feelings, and the Assembly made haste to rescind its decision. In Bengal, though the Legislature has resolved that it desires to have Ministers, Mr. Das prevents it from agreeing to trust any particular Minister. Swarajists start with the assumption that it is useless to seek to remove British doubts of India's fitness for self-government. But the true enemy of Swaraj is Indian scepticism on this point, and the Swarajist policy undoubtedly supplies Indian conservatism with very effective propaganda. The Indian intellect recognizes, indeed it foresaw, the danger. At the last Indian General Election a disillusioned follower of Mr. Gandhi was asked why he voted in defiance of his master's behest. "I have turned Conservative," he replied. "Then why vote for the Swarajists?" "Because their policy seems to me admirably calculated to demonstrate our incapacity for self-government and to make my countrymen duly thankful for the blessings bestowed on us by the bureaucracy." Luckily, India can produce better statesmen than Mr. Das.

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The Spanish Directory have issued a statute which deals drastically with the problem of Catalan autonomy. The existing provinces of the kingdom are to be maintained and the powers of the provincial Governments in local affairs slightly increased; but the Mancomunidad, the chief organ of the Catalan Home Rule party, is to be dissolved. This measure can only appear to us, in this country, as a deplorable mistake. Accustomed as we are to the idea of decentralization, the suppression on political grounds of a body which, with all its defects, has done great service to historical science and literature, must inevitably appear unwise and tyrannical. It must be added, in fairness, that the Latin conception of

national unity, with its Cæsarean traditions, differs not in detail but in essence from the Anglo-Saxon, and General Primo de Rivera probably voices the opinion of a great mass of his countrymen when he says that the Mancomunidad laboured to destroy a love of Spain in the hearts and minds of Catalans. General Primo de Rivera, though an Andalusian, has simply fallen in with the Castilian tradition, which regards national unity and decentralization as incompatible. But while it would be unjust, in judging General Primo de Rivera, to ignore this profound difference in inherited political outlook, it is impossible to ignore its probable consequences. A movement so deep-seated as the campaign for Catalan autonomy will assuredly find new means of reasserting itself; to drive it underground is simply to increase its explosive and disruptive force.

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A very interesting new orientation in Balkan politics is to be observed in the growing tendency of the Balkan States to draw together. The new Græco-Serbian Alliance and the possibility that the inclusion of Greece in the Little Entente will be discussed at the Little Entente Conference at Bucharest—which has been postponed until the end of the month—are both significant signs of a Balkan consolidation. It is probable that Albania—once the St. Naume dispute is amicably settled—would join in any Inter-Balkan Pact which may be in the making. Signs are not wanting that Yugoslavia also, whilst adhering closely to the policy of friendship with Italy, is ready to give the lead to a "Balkan" policy for the Balkan States. This consolidation of the existing order in South-Eastern Europe is not unnaturally causing a certain fluttering in the political dovescots of Moscow, where the pundits of the Third International are suffering the disappointment of seeing their plans for a Balkan (Soviet) Confederation go awry. They are as active as ever, however, and it appears that on the second of this month the Balkan Communist Federation held a meeting at Baden, under the chairmanship of M. Tcherski, Soviet representative at Vienna, with a view to transferring to Vienna their Propaganda Bureaux at Odessa, Kiev, and Karkov.

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The ratification of the Cuban-American treaty, by which the United States relinquishes all claim of title to the Isle of Pines, is an event of considerable importance. The treaty was negotiated and signed so long ago as 1904; but its ratification has, hitherto, been blocked by opposition in the United States Senate. This opposition was based partly on the interests of American property holders, and partly on the alleged suitability of the island for a naval base. In point of fact the property holders have never been molested by the Cuban authorities, and their rights are amply secured by the treaty itself; while the strategical value of the Isle of Pines is negligible, in view of the coaling stations leased from Cuba in 1903. In these circumstances, failure to ratify the treaty has contributed to the suspicion with which the declarations of the United States as to non-intervention and non-aggrandizement have sometimes been regarded by the republics of Central and South America. That suspicion was very marked at the last Pan-American Conference. It may be hoped that ratification of the treaty, following as it does on a general modification in the Caribbean policy of the United States, will go some way towards the creation of more cordial relations with Latin America. The State Department, whose desire for such relations has been clearly shown, may be congratulated on their victory.

## WANTED—A NAVAL POLICY.

IT is an appalling paradox that our armament expenditure should be as high to-day (when due allowance has been made for the higher price-level) as it was just before the war—after a decade of alarm and acute naval competition with Germany. The fact has not perhaps been grasped as vividly as it ought to be, because we have come to it by the route of successive reductions from the swollen figures of wartime. This process of reduction is now, however, definitely at an end. We have this year a slight increase in the combined service estimates, and further increases are likely in the near future. We are settling down to a post-war position which means an expenditure on armaments roughly equal in real values (and much greater in terms of money) to the maximum we spent before the war. Moreover there are tendencies at work which may make inevitable a substantial increase in our present strength. This is not a situation which we ought to accept with an easy unconcern.

Undiscriminating denunciation of armament expenditure is utterly useless. Air defence is a new need for which provision must be made, and the Government's programme is certainly not excessive. It is upon the Admiralty Estimates that armament economists direct their main attack. The position here undoubtedly gives cause for uneasiness. There are ominous signs that the danger latent in the Washington Agreement, namely that competition in building might simply be diverted from battleships (which are limited) to cruisers (which are not), is likely to materialize. This is a contingency which we ought to make every effort to avert; but the sort of criticism which we had last year over the five cruisers, and which we are threatened with again, will not help to avert it. Naval strength is so vital to us that if competition is to occur we cannot avoid taking part in it. Indeed, merely to refrain from building and allow our present effective strength to be reduced by obsolescence is to prepare the way for a future panic. The only way out lies in extending the range of agreed limitation to the lighter types. It is on this matter that it is important to know the Government's attitude. Washington is understood to contemplate the calling of a new Conference. Are we ready to play our part in it? If such a Conference is to have any chance of success, we must be in a position to define clearly our own naval needs in relation to lighter types of ships. It is therefore significant that it should be announced in the Naval Estimates that proposals for new construction will be laid before Parliament at a later date, when the Government have completed the inquiry into the minimum standard of naval strength, initiated by their predecessors. We trust that this inquiry is being concluded with some regard to the possibility of a new Conference on naval armaments.

France, as we have recently shown, bases her naval policy on the demands of coast defence and the protection of her communications with her African colonies; Japan, on the security of the China and Japan Seas. For Great Britain, with her exceptional dependence on imported foodstuffs and raw materials, the one overmastering preoccupation must always be security of the Atlantic approaches. This, as the war proved, is the vital point. Important as is the Mediterranean, an alternative route round the Cape of Good Hope is available for the Eastern trades, and was used in 1916-17 until extreme shortage of tonnage, largely due to preventable causes, compelled a return to the Suez route. Even in peace, the larger proportion of the Australasian trade goes out and comes home *via* the Cape, Panama,

and the Horn. The trade routes and focal points in the North and South Atlantic, on the other hand, are vital and irreplaceable; there the trade of every route is concentrated. To be strong everywhere is impossible, both financially and politically. The heart of the whole system must be covered unless we are prepared to discard naval defence altogether.

Since the dependence of Great Britain on imports is exceptional, and since every ship employed to attack trade necessitates the allocation to trade defence of a proportionately greater force, it has always been tacitly admitted that a considerable British preponderance in the lighter types might be created without provocation to foreign Powers. As compared with the United States and Japan, our present ratio in cruisers is 1.4; 1.0; 0.8; in destroyers, 0.6; 1.0; 0.3; in submarines, 0.7; 1.0; 0.3; though we are superior to America in submarines of the largest type. The General Naval Board at Washington has now issued a report recommending that the United States should build up to the 5: 5: 3 ratio in cruiser types. This is, in effect, a demand not merely for equality but for superiority of strength, for the United States Navy has no such comparable commitments for the defence of vital communications, involving wide dispersal of force. The demand is not in keeping with what is known of the President's desires, and it would be very rash to assume that it will be endorsed either by Congress or by public opinion. The fact that it has been put forward by the Naval Board is, nevertheless, sufficient to show the extreme urgency of arriving at an agreement for limitation; for such a programme as is there contemplated must inevitably have its repercussions both here and in Japan.

Meanwhile, what is the existing position? We have at present in commission 49 cruisers and 190 destroyers. A considerable proportion of these would, however, be required, in war, for scouting and screen work with the battle fleet. We may assume, perhaps, that about 25 cruisers and 130 destroyers would be available for the protection of the communications. Would they suffice?

At the end of the late war we had in commission, for all duties, 120 cruisers and 309 destroyers, and these, with the assistance of the Allied Navies, and a swarm of sloops and patrol boats, barely sufficed to secure our military and commercial communications. It must be remembered, however, that this was the result of five years of war, during which both sides had been building, and that our very extensive military commitments complicated the problem. The peace strength of any Power in the lighter types must be regarded as a nucleus, to which large additions will inevitably be made in the course of a conflict. Further, no European Power is likely, for many years, to be in a position to develop, at the beginning of a war, an attack comparable in intensity to that we had to meet in 1917-18. Japan does not menace the Atlantic routes. Even the American Navy, as at present constituted, is not conspicuously well equipped with cruisers and submarines of the types employed for oceanic raiding.

From all this, it would seem that about 25 to 30 cruisers and 130 destroyers available for trade defence should give the nucleus of a force providing that reasonable degree of security for vital interests at which alone it is possible to aim. Such a force would be strengthened at once, on the outbreak of war, by armed merchant cruisers; and the immense capacities of our dockyards for expansion would speedily provide the necessary sloops and patrol boats for inshore work. Within a few months the yards would begin to reinforce our destroyer strength.



It cannot be pretended, however, that there is much margin, since an attack, even by a greatly inferior fleet, with access to the Atlantic, would probably compel putting the vital trades into convoy, and we know by experience how rapidly the work of escort eats up cruiser and destroyer strength.

Types, however, as well as numbers, have to be considered. We may be practically certain that any possible opponent will attack the trade routes with cruisers of the oceanic, 10,000-ton type, and this will compel the use of similar vessels, with heavy armament and a big radius of action, for ocean escort. It seems, therefore, extremely difficult to criticize either the late or the present Government for their decision to replace a proportion of the 5,000-ton cruisers, as they become obsolescent, with larger ships. That such ships are more costly is regrettable; it cannot be said that they represent an addition to the offensive strength of the Fleet. Naval opinion is at present divided as to their suitability for fleet work; all that are likely to be built in the next few years will be required for defensive purposes.

What is urgent is that a limit should be set to the numerical increase of the minor types; a limit that we earnestly hope may serve as the basis of subsequent negotiations for all-round reduction. Should the Americans press for a rigid application of the 5:5:3 ratio to the minor types, the problem will unquestionably become very difficult, the more so as the building programmes of other navies are certain to be affected. On the other hand, while we consider that Great Britain is fully justified, because of her exceptional requirements, in demanding a higher ratio in cruisers and destroyers than in capital ships, a proposal to stabilize rigidly the position existing to-day might prove equally fatal to agreement. There is, however, a device which has not, so far as we know, been discussed; but which might assist the search for a formula. War experience shows that the lighter craft employed for service with the battle fleet are always of the most up-to-date design and construction, though not necessarily, as regards cruisers, of the largest type. On the other hand, older cruisers and destroyers were very effectively used in the war for convoy, escort, and subsidiary operations. The limitation of naval armaments has been carried out, hitherto, on the lines of keeping a certain number of ships in commission and absolutely scrapping the rest. There seems, however, to be no reason why this principle should not be modified by allowing a Power in the position of Great Britain to retain a "rationed" reserve of unscrapped ships, on the condition that they should never be put into commission during time of peace, and should receive only such attention as would enable them to be drawn upon as a war reserve. In other words, the ratio, instead of being purely numerical, would be a numerical ratio, supplemented by the provision that only a certain proportion of the ships should be below a certain age. We should then have a reserve of unscrapped, uncommissioned ships, similar to that from which we drew so largely during the war for defensive and subsidiary purposes. Coupled with the productive power of the British dockyards, this might well enable us to accept a lower ratio in the minor types than we should otherwise be justified in demanding.

It is clear, in any event, that the one outstanding interest of this country in naval affairs is the devising of a policy that will make limitation possible. If no agreement is reached, the scrapping or postponement of a ship here and a ship there will give no permanent security against a renewal of competitive building; for

we may find ourselves forced, at any moment, to choose between an increase of naval strength and a definite admission that the fleet is inadequate for the performance of its primary duties, and that an outbreak of war would involve a repetition of the crisis of 1917, when so little stood between this country and starvation. The only logical, permanent alternatives to armament competition are complete disarmament, and limitation. Desirable as it is that the Estimates should be criticized in detail, the really vital matter is to obtain from the Government an assurance that the present inquiry is governed by the possibilities of a new Conference; that it is directed mainly to the discovery of a ratio which this country can accept, and that no effective increase in British naval strength will be proposed until the possibilities of limitation have been frankly and fully explored.

The time is running short. Any reluctance on our part to respond to the overtures from Washington will reinforce the "big navy" agitation in the States. The development of the Singapore base threatens, as we have shown, to have reactions on both the Japanese naval programme and our own that will immensely increase the difficulty of limitation. It is urgently desirable to restrict naval expenditure to a minimum at the present moment. It is still more urgent to be assured that the Government have a reasoned naval policy based, not on meeting the most unlikely contingencies in every sea, but on such reasonable security for vital interests as could be submitted for international discussion with some prospect of agreement.

## THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN TO-DAY.

### THE REAL ISSUE.

THERE has just been published in Kenya Colony a Report which throws further light upon the clear-cut issue which is now being fought out from Uganda in the north, right away to Rhodesia in the south, involving some 21,000,000 of people—namely, whether the raw material we need for our factories is to be produced by a system of (a) Peasant Proprietorship or (b) White-owned plantations with coloured native labour.

Let all subordinate issues be dismissed, for this is the one which really matters. The Report now published is an interim one, submitted to the Government by a Commission appointed by the late Governor of Kenya, Sir R. Coryndon—a Commission which included in its membership the Colonial Secretary, Lord Delamere, and Mr. Maxwell, the Chief Native Commissioner.

The Commission was appointed to consider the problem of the native labour supply in relation to the production of raw material. The outstanding feature of this Report is that the Commissioners appear to have ignored altogether the importance of native production, and to have concentrated upon the methods to be adopted for supplying White plantation-owners with labour! The Commissioners recommend that greater efforts should be made to improve housing conditions, the supply of foodstuffs and firewood, and the provision of goods for sale on the plantation at cost, and they wisely remark that the "profit to the employer should lie in the increased contentment of his labour." With a good deal of courage they hint at a sad state of affairs in Kenya, and in calling for increased medical facilities they disclose the startling fact that the Principal Medical Officer estimates that in certain areas the death-rate of

children under twelve is 400 to 500 per mille per annum! This is probably the highest known death-rate in any British Dependency.

But the real concern of the Commission was, of course, with labour, and in the section of statistics of workers, under its eight sub-sections, it is interesting to note that there is not the slightest reference to natives engaged in native industries. The following is the table:—

## STATISTICS.

The total 1921 count of population was ...	2,118,405
The number of males between 15 and 40 years of age available for labour is assessed at ...	423,681
The demand for labour is stated to be:	
Government Departments and Works ...	24,500
Non-Native Estates and Domestic Service ...	106,500
Railway Development ...	15,000
Total Demand ...	146,000
The average number of registered natives in employment from July to October, 1924, was	136,393
The average number of registered natives during the same period was ...	519,056
The percentage of registered natives in employment was therefore ...	26.28

The recommendations of the Commission for forcing the supply are both novel and interesting, and are designed to raise the maximum labour supply at the time of the coffee harvest, which it is expected will soon reach 100,000 acres. The first suggestion is the excellent one that the native workers should receive agricultural training, although the proposal to train children to "pick with both hands" is a little doubtful. The second main recommendation is that of improving the machinery for recruiting labourers. The third has an alarming ring about it, namely, "A judicious application of the Native Authority Ordinance." This can only mean *administrative pressure* upon natives to work for White employers. Another recommendation of the same order is that Government officials "should encourage settlement" of natives on the settlers' farms. Finally, that the collection of the Hut Tax should synchronize, as far as possible, with the period when a maximum of labour is required by the settlers. The Commissioners quote in support of the need for pressure the action that Mr. Amery is alleged to have just approved of the "compulsory recruitment" of 4,000 labourers for railway construction.

Out of these main suggestions, three at least are that Government machinery should be utilized to add administrative pressure to the wages offered by private interests.

The production in all these territories is becoming more and more that of cotton and coffee; at a pinch we can do without coffee, but no British Government can view with other than alarm the possibility of a cotton famine. Equally is it true that the natives of these areas can produce the cotton we need. The potential cotton lands between the Nile and the Zambesi are more extensive, and the cotton population more numerous, than those with which America produces her 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 bales of raw cotton. But cotton production by peasant proprietorship is the only sure and sound method, and far-seeing settlers, missionaries and administrators are quietly but earnestly pushing these views, but vested interests are clinging to the plantation policy. The report just issued comes powerfully to the aid of the plantation owners, and heavily against the native peasant-proprietor. The chief menace lies in the daring proposals for the use of administrative machinery to compel the natives to work for private interests—that is the outstanding fact of the recommendations.

The organ of the settlers reinforces this view with strident editorials, including one on "Discipline," in which it is urged that mere "encouragement . . .

unsupported by a more concrete form of pressure" will fail, and what is wanted, "both in the reserves and outside them," is "Discipline."

The old question, therefore, is revived once again—namely, will the Home Government insist upon maintaining the historic Colonial policy of keeping Government machinery rigidly to its legitimate job of administration, or will it allow a grave departure by permitting a form of administrative prostitution, in the interests of private profit? It was this feature—and, indeed, this danger—which occupied so much of the later years of the late Lord Cromer, and drew from him this definition of modern slavery:—

"The answer to the question, what do we mean by slavery? is that we reluctantly admit the necessity of compulsory labour in certain cases, and that we do not stigmatize as slavery such labour when, under all possible safeguards against the occurrence of abuses, it is employed for recognized and indispensable purposes of public utility. On the other hand, we regard the system when employed for private profit as wholly unjustifiable and as synonymous with slavery."

JOHN H. HARRIS.

## THE LAST OF THE DEDLOCKS.

TO understand the character and point of view of the late Lord Curzon, it is necessary to reread "Bleak House." In that book there is a portrait of Sir Leicester Dedlock which gives a clue to all that seemed strange, and out of date, and fantastic, and slightly absurd in Lord Curzon's composition:—

"Sir Leicester Dedlock is only a baronet, but there is no mightier baronet than he. His family is as old as the hills, and infinitely more respectable. He has a general opinion that the world might get on without hills, but would be done up without Dedlocks. He would on the whole admit Nature to be a good idea (a little low, perhaps, when not enclosed with a park-fence), but an idea dependent for its execution on your great county families. He is a gentleman of strict conscience, disdainful of all littleness and meanness, and ready, on the shortest notice, to die any death you may please to mention rather than give occasion for the least impeachment of his integrity. He is an honourable, obstinate, truthful, high-spirited, intensely prejudiced, perfectly unreasonable man."

I do not claim that this would serve as an accurate portrait of Lord Curzon, only that there was a strong family likeness between the Baronet and the Marquis. This likeness came out even more strongly in their conversation. Sir Leicester was indignant when he learned that his housekeeper's son had been asked to stand for Parliament:—

"It is a remarkable example of the confusion into which the present age has fallen; of the obliteration of landmarks, the opening of floodgates, and the uprooting of distinctions," says Sir Leicester with stately gloom; "that I have been informed, by Mr. Tulkinghorn, that Mrs. Rouncewell's son has been invited to go into Parliament."

To Lord Curzon, "the obliteration of landmarks, the opening of floodgates, and the uprooting of distinctions" were similarly implied in Mr. Lloyd George's famous Budget. Speaking on the second reading in the House of Lords, he said:—

"I doubt whether sufficient importance has been given during the debate to the social concomitants of the Budget and to its financial sequel. By the social concomitants I mean the vexation of constant and insistent appeals to the Law Courts, and the almost intolerable inquisition into the life and property and economy of every person in this country who has property in any form—an even more intolerable burden than the taxation. If you pass this Budget into law, you will be setting an Old Man of the Sea upon the shoulders, not of your lordships alone, but of all the respectable and reputable classes in the community."



Still pursuing the theme of his housekeeper's son, Sir Leicester went on:—

"He is called, I believe—an—Ironmaster." Sir Leicester says it slowly, and with gravity and doubt, as not being sure but that he is called a Lead-mistress; or that the right word may be some other word expressive of some other relationship to some other metal. . . . 'He has declined the proposal, if my information from Mr. Tulkinghorn be correct, as I have no doubt it is, Mr. Tulkinghorn being always correct and exact; still that does not,' says Sir Leicester, 'that does not lessen the anomaly; which is fraught with strange considerations—startling considerations, as it appears to me.'"

Sir Leicester's hesitation over the word "ironmaster" irresistibly recalls the familiar story of Lord Curzon making arrangements to prevent a public festival from developing into "what I understand the lower orders term 'a be-ā-no.'"

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to labour the point by adducing further quotations. A careful study only serves to confirm the general impression that in his political and social outlook, his public spirit, his sense of public duty and *noblesse oblige*, his stately diction—in his mannerisms even—Lord Curzon was an authentic member of the Dedlock family; perhaps the last of the line. This is not written in a spirit of ridicule or disrespect. A splendid tradition was embodied in these Dedlocks, and it was they and their like who ruled England for hundreds of years. For if they claimed a dignity and state which we regard as out of proportion to their human value, they, or the best of them at any rate, also acknowledged social obligations on an equal scale. Lord Curzon was the best of Dedlocks in this respect. He laboured unceasingly in the service of his country. He devoted his great abilities to an astonishing range of activities in the academic and literary, as well as in the political field. If he enjoyed the sense of power and the pomp of high office, he certainly did not shirk the drudgery which they involved, but rather added to it by doing for himself the work which others delegate. He wrote many of his weighty and eloquent dispatches with his own hand, and refused the aid of shorthand writers even when dealing with a voluminous correspondence. The most amazing thing about Lord Curzon, however, was his capacity for taking himself seriously. He was a man of very exceptional ability, and no one would have been surprised if he had set a high value upon his intellect. Other Balliol men, and even some men from less famous educational establishments, have done that. But Lord Curzon seemed to embody a claim of superiority in respect of rank alone.

"He clearly knew the deference due  
To a man of pedigree."

And in this respect he was out of harmony with the times in which he lived. The divine right of the nobility and gentry has ceased even to be questioned; the claim has been tacitly withdrawn along with that of Kings and Emperors. Now that Lord Curzon is dead, the Kaiser is probably the only man living who still believes wholeheartedly in the hereditary principle—and he may have his doubts. The other members of ancient and aristocratic families who, instead of holding aloof from national affairs like the aristocrats in other democracies, still take a remarkably large part in the government of Britain, base their claims on other grounds. But the Dedlocks did not only believe in heredity, it was the central guiding principle of their existence. It gave them a confidence in themselves collectively which could survive any personal shortcomings. Lord Curzon shared it to the full, and, though it did not prevent him from being Foreign Minister, it was the real reason why he could not become Prime Minister. The Conservative

Party might easily have survived with its leader in the House of Lords, but a leader who obviously believed in his own social superiority would have been fatal to it. The Party knew this instinctively, and thus it was that the last of the Dedlocks, who cared intensely for the office, was rejected in favour of an "Ironmaster" who was indifferent to it; "a remarkable example of the confusion into which the present age has fallen."

PETER IBBETSON.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ARTICLE 429 OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES.

SIR,—Your comment last week on what I said in the House of Commons about the interdependence of French security and the evacuation of the Rhineland under Article 429 of the Treaty of Versailles misses the real point.

I have never heard that anyone disputed the plain meaning of the last paragraph of that Article. It makes the third and last stage of evacuation definitely dependent upon "guarantees against unprovoked aggression" considered sufficient by the Allied and Associated Governments. But—and here was the point I endeavoured to make—this condition governing the third and last stage of evacuation has no bearing whatever upon the pledge to carry out the two earlier stages, namely, the evacuation of Cologne at the end of five years, and of Coblenz at the end of ten.

I quoted M. Tardieu simply in order to show that the French makers of the Treaty, although they secured the addition of this final paragraph to Article 429 to meet the express contingency that the Guarantee Pacts might not be ratified, never attempted to make the first two stages of evacuation dependent upon the ratification of those Pacts, or upon anything but the first paragraph of the Article, namely, the faithful carrying out of the Treaty conditions by Germany.

Let me add that I took no part, however humble, in the negotiation of the Treaty and have no authority for interpreting it. The language of the Article is, however, surely as plain as a pikestaff, and M. Tardieu's comments merely show that the possibility of the Guarantee Pacts not being ratified had been taken into full consideration when that language was finally passed.—Yours, &c.,

EDWARD GRIGG.

17, Waterloo Place, S.W.1.  
March 18th, 1925.

[We appreciated fully the point which Sir Edward Grigg was making. We ventured to lay stress on a different point, because we thought it even more important. Indeed, we think it so important as to be worth setting out in some detail.

Article 429 of the Treaty of Versailles begins as follows:—

"If the conditions of the present Treaty are faithfully carried out by Germany, the occupation referred to in Article 428 will be successively restricted as follows:—

(I.) "At the expiration of five years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Cologne. . . .

(II.) "At the expiration of ten years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Coblenz. . . .

(III.) "At the expiration of fifteen years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Mainz, the bridgehead of Kehl, and the remainder of the German territory under occupation."

The Article then proceeds as follows:—

"If at that date the guarantees against unprovoked aggression by Germany are not considered sufficient by the Allied and Associated Governments, the evacuation of the occupying troops may be delayed to the extent regarded as necessary for the purpose of obtaining the required guarantees."

The evacuation of the Cologne zone has been postponed, and this postponement is officially justified by

appeal to the introductory paragraph about the faithful execution of the Treaty. But responsible Frenchmen, including even M. Herriot, have virtually declared that, unless France gets some Pact which she considers adequate to guarantee her security, she has no intention of permitting the evacuation of Cologne, however much Germany complies with the Treaty. This attitude they seek to justify on the score of the failure of the tripartite Franco-British-American Pact of 1919. Sir Edward Grigg's point is that France has no right to use this as an argument for postponing the evacuation of the first two zones, because—and this is the point that seems to us of more importance—the last paragraph of Article 429 was inserted expressly to provide for a breakdown of the tripartite Pact, and entitles France, not to delay the evacuation of the first two zones, but to stay in the third zone, presumably for ever. We repeat that "this is a version of the intention of Article 429 which, so far as we know, has not been substantiated by any British statesman," and we add that it raises a most serious question touching the good faith of the authors of the Treaty. For what does it mean? If Sir Edward Grigg and M. Tardieu are right, it was secretly agreed between the Allies that the occupation of the Rhineland, understood by the world at large to be a purely temporary affair, might be transformed (as regards part of it) into a permanent annexation, in the event of contingencies (which have actually occurred) over which Germany had no control whatever. Does he think that this was "as plain as a pikestaff" to Germany? Does he think it was fair dealing towards her? We repeat that this is a matter which ought to be cleared up by those who negotiated the Treaty.—ED., THE NATION.]

#### SINGAPORE AND JAPAN.

SIR,—There are two statements made in your interesting article of March 14th which, I think, call for correction.

The first of these is that "since the fall of Tsingtau no European Power possesses even a cruiser base in the Far East, with the exception of French Saigon and the Dutch East Indian ports."

Surely you must have overlooked the existence of the base of the Royal Navy at Hong Kong, which exceeds in importance all other naval bases—outside Japanese waters—in the Far East! Where, is it supposed, do British, American, and other ships of war from Europe which patrol those waters, repair and refit?

Hong Kong was a naval station before Japan ever possessed a Navy.

In the second place, you state that "Singapore is far from an ideal site for a defensive base. Were Australia threatened with invasion, a base in Australia itself would be of infinitely greater value." Now that is entirely at variance with the opinions of our naval experts; nor is your view any longer shared by our brothers in Australia and New Zealand. They realize, as we all have done since the Great War, that the "elbow-bone" of naval strategy—so far as the British Empire is concerned—rests in the narrow straits of the Malay Archipelago.

I am not a naval man, but a member of that large and ubiquitous tribe of Colonial Englishmen who are equally at home in the Southern Seas or on the China Coast, from Sandakan to Singapore, as in their own revered country; and I cannot for the life of me understand this rather abject aversion to an effective base at Singapore for our ships of war. Few, who have not sailed those waters, realize that Japan is a good nine days' steam from that port; and to argue that the Japanese have grounds for uneasiness is to impute to our late very good Ally motives which, in the interests of diplomacy, should not be interpreted into plain words. Japan in fact has no territorial interests whatsoever in or near those waters. Her commercial interests are almost entirely confined to British territory, and they thrive and flourish under the protection so afforded them.

We are on common ground, I believe, in assuming that the function of the Royal Navy is to protect the Empire and preserve open our trade routes in time of warlike operations—by whomsoever they are conducted. How few of us realize that more shores of the British Empire are washed by the blue waters of the Pacific than by the Atlantic ocean! And how many of us, I wonder, appreciate the enormous volume of sea-borne commerce that converges upon the Straits of Malacca—a veritable "gateway"?

Who can say what the future has in store for us, or with whom we may be involved in war in those parts? It is certain that the world's centre of gravity has passed to the Pacific and will continue to rest there. But the instrument of power must lie in the hands of *someone*, and which, amongst all those discordant elements, would prefer that it should be wrested from England? I ask you. Certainly not the Dutch, our neighbours, who possess and govern vast territories in those parts. We do not hear of "growing uneasiness" in them, nor yet from our French friends in Indo-China, who more than any might have found grounds for objection.

Let us go farther North—still a long way from Japan—and ask the Cantonese merchant or coolie what terrors the Navy of Britain holds for them. They will tell you, with a smile, that their nights are restful now. But as late as last summer their city would have been a shambles but for the decision and prompt action of our able Commodore at Hong Kong; much to the chagrin of the late lamented Sun Yat Sen. That gentleman himself had on more than one occasion sought refuge from his compatriots on a British gunboat. He indeed has left many a dry eye behind him! But I fear I am getting too discursive.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN LLOYD DOLBEY.

Devonshire Club, S.W.1.

[(1) We had certainly not forgotten Hong Kong; we were referring, as the context showed clearly, to Powers other than the British Empire. Our point was that we have already sufficient bases in the Far East for the cruiser forces necessary to provide protection against sporadic raiding, and that there is no Power, except Japan, against whom any occasion to employ capital ships in those waters could possibly arise.]

(2) We do not believe that naval experts would question our statement that "were Australia threatened with invasion, a base in Australia itself would be of infinitely greater value than Singapore." As a cruiser base Singapore is useful for the defence of trade in the Indian Ocean against raiders. As a base for capital ships its main strategic value lies in its offensive possibilities. It is true that it is nine days' steam from Japan; but in the event of war it would be feasible, given Singapore as a capital-ship base, to seize an advanced base in the China Seas, which would bear the same kind of relation to Singapore as Scapa did to Rosyth. This offensive potentiality is quite consistent with an unaggressive diplomatic purpose; but it makes it idle to dismiss as absurd the uneasiness which is, in fact, felt in Japan.

(3) The importance of Singapore as a focal point of trade is unquestionably great; but even with a capital-ship base at Singapore, it would be practically impossible to maintain trade with countries east of the Straits in the event of a war in the Pacific. Further, that trade, important as it is, is not, like the trade of the North and South Atlantic, vital to the existence of this country. The composition and bases of the Japanese fleet preclude the possibility of sustained operations in the Indian Ocean, and the Australian trade is beyond its reach. No other Power can operate in those waters except by sporadic raiding, with which we are already equipped to deal.

It is extremely difficult to understand what Mr. Dolbey means when he says that Japan's commercial interests are almost entirely confined to British territory. The statement is quite in conflict with the official returns of Japanese trade.

(4) The last paragraph but one of Mr. Dolbey's letter is worth attention. It reflects, we believe, the real motives of the scheme. We are not seeking to attack Japan. We are anxious only that "the instrument of power" in the Pacific should "lie in the hands" of ourselves, so that the influence of our diplomacy may be strong in the East. This means logically, not only a capital-ship base at Singapore, but a great increase of naval strength; for whatever may be "the world's centre of gravity," we cannot uncover the Atlantic approaches which are vital to the existence of Great Britain, and a great display of power in the Far East implies a divided Fleet. But is not all this concern with the balance of power in the Pacific utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the Washington Treaty? The whole purpose of that agreement was to rule out struggles for predominance in the Pacific altogether, and we cannot afford to throw away the security given by its terms for the chances of a new armament competition.—ED., THE NATION.]



## WAGE AND EFFICIENCY.

SIR,—It is interesting to read the last paragraph of Mr. Clement's article on C.3 in your issue of March 21st in connection with the paragraph at the bottom of the first column of page 848 of the same issue. As a means of preventing the undue multiplication of an undesirable class in our own country Mr. Clement advocates the establishment of birth-control clinics in all welfare centres. But we are constantly being reminded that the world is now one, and if that is true, it is well to try to discern all the implications of that fact. The writer of the note referred to on page 848 believes that the "premiss that the workers' standards in high-wage countries are endangered by the fact that lower wages obtain elsewhere," the idea at the bottom of the International Labour Organization, is fallacious. But I am not so sure of that. Differences in wage-levels between different countries have their roots, we are told, in fundamental differences of national efficiency and circumstance. Quite true, but how much is due to difference in efficiency and how much to "circumstance"? Last week I had a letter from a member of the Legislative Assembly of Southern Rhodesia, who informs me that "coloured men are employed to deliver letters, which requires a certain amount of education, and are paid £3 per month. The corresponding wage of a white man engaged in the same employment would probably be from £20 to £25 per month." He states also that in his own experience he had found a pure Nyasa native better skilled in handling intricate machinery than himself, and this is in agreement with what I have learnt from other sources. A Nyasaland missionary told me that in his opinion the Bantu tribes had a genius for engineering. It is the competition of this low-wage skilled labour that is the chief cause of the colour problem of South Africa, the origin of Hertzog's Colour Bar Bill, which is now exciting such intense feeling there. That the low wage in proportion to efficiency tends to keep down the wage of the whites in the Union is never questioned. It is that low wage that is bringing about the multiplication of the "poor whites," who, Mr. Neame tells us in the present number of "The Quarterly," now make up one in twelve of the white population.

But it will be said that that is true only where different wage-levels occur in the same country. Will Dundee, however, confirm that view? Owing to the widespread markets for cotton manufactures and the remarkable growth in the population and commerce of the world in the last hundred and fifty years it is not so easy to prove any prejudicial effect due to low-wage labour in the cotton as in the jute industry. But the tendency is there, which necessitates inquiry as to the circumstances that keep down the wages, and, with the wages, though not in the same degree, the efficiency of labour in the textile industries in India, China, and Japan. The answer in the Report of the Indian Industrial Commission is that there is always a sufficient superabundance of agricultural labour to supply the towns with factory labourers working even under such conditions as are described in Miss Kelman's "Labour in India" and elsewhere.

And if that is the first cause, where is the remedy? I can see none except in facing the fact that the world is one, that it is not enough to think of one country in providing a remedy. The problem, as it seems to me, is to create conditions which would provide an adequate motive for the peasantry so restricting their numbers as to favour a higher type of agriculture, a greater return per head, which means higher purchasing power. This, no doubt, is a matter of exceeding, but, I would fain hope, not superhuman difficulty. If there is any soundness in this suggestion, it is at least a step to know the true nature of the problem.—Yours, &c.,

GEO. G. CHISHOLM.

[We adhere to our view that the notion that "the workers' standards in high-wage countries are endangered by the fact that lower wages obtain elsewhere" is, in general, a fallacy. Of course, in a short paragraph, we could not give a complete account of a very complex problem, and Mr. Chisholm's instance of Dundee jute raises an aspect with which we did not deal. We are liable to suffer from a long-period tendency on the part of countries, which have hitherto been mainly agricul-

tural, to develop manufactures which are competitive with our own. This tendency has not much to do with the general standard of life in such countries; or rather, since a high standard of life is conducive to industrial aptitude, the tendency is more rapid and more marked in high-standard countries like the United States than in low-standard countries like India.

On the other hand, the relation between the standards of wages, &c., insisted on in the particular industries which compete with our own and the general standard of life may be important. If, to take India as an example, manufacturing industry is able to get labour at rates inferior to the general Indian standard of life, the process of industrialization will be artificially hastened; in the converse case, it will be artificially hampered. The former is undesirable from every legitimate standpoint, that of the Indian worker as well as ourselves, and if it occurs and if international labour legislation can prevent it, well and good. But the idea which seems to underlie the neo-Protectionism of the Labour Party which we were attacking is that we should endeavour to insist on labour conditions in Indian industries competing with our own, not only as high as the general standard of life there, but comparable with our own very much higher standards. If we could succeed in imposing this, the whole industrialization of India might be stifled, and (from a narrow standpoint) this might be beneficial to us, but it would certainly not be beneficial to the Indians, who would merely be confined thereby to the still lower standards of tillage. Largely for this reason, it would be a futile policy to aim at, for we as an exporting country are utterly unable to force conditions on another country which are plainly disadvantageous to it.

Mr. Chisholm recognizes that the general standard of life of a country must properly govern the minimum conditions which can be laid down for particular industries. He is anxious accordingly to raise the standards prevailing in Indian agriculture by limiting the population, and thus to make possible higher standards in manufacturing industry. This is highly desirable in itself, but we fear that it would not really be a remedy for the problem of Eastern competition. The truth is that the gradual industrialization of Eastern countries is a natural process, which cannot be arrested by any legitimate means. The wise policy for us is to adapt ourselves to this tendency, by concentrating more and more on the production of goods requiring special skill or resources, in which our relative advantage is greatest. This is not a moral, frankly, which conveys much hope to the Dundee jute industry. The Lancashire cotton industry is facing, with considerable success, a formidable Eastern competition by the method of going "finer" in the yarns and cloths it produces. The real trouble of Dundee is that this possibility is very limited in the case of jute.—ED., THE NATION.]

## "C.3."

SIR,—It is a little difficult to follow some of the arguments by means of which Mr. Frank Clement attempts to justify his assumption that the deplorable proportion of men rejected on physical grounds for army service cannot be regarded as a rough-and-ready index of the post-war national physique. He finds, for instance, in the knowledge that "unemployment insurance enables young men to wait for the revival of their trades" what he regards as "a simpler and better explanation of the fact that fit men are not offering their services." But why only "fit men"? Would not the same factor operate equally against the economic compulsion to seek to enlist in the case of men not so fit? The same thing applies with regard to the reasons advanced by the Secretary of State for War, which Mr. Clement cites with approval. There is no attempt to show why the proportion of fit men should be diminished as a consequence of the reasons urged. "War weariness and aversion from a military life" are surely not an attitude of mind possessed only by the fit. The attraction of emigration applies equally in the case of the out-of-work unfit man as that of the out-of-work fit man; and the fact that unemployment insurance tends to minimize conscription by starvation, even if it diminishes the number of applicants for enlistment, will surely have the effect of reducing applications from that

section of the working class in which unfitness would be most likely to be found.

There is one other obvious consideration which Mr. Clement fails to take into account. Although the economic distress which helps to push men into the army would, were there no countervailing factor, result in the average physique of applicants for enlistment being below the general average, this is probably outweighed by the fact that those who are so clearly unfit as to stand no chance of acceptance would not apply, and would therefore be excluded from the figures upon which the average is based.

The conclusion that there is an alarmingly heavy proportion of the people suffering from a "C.3" physique may be inept, but this is hardly demonstrated by the considerations which Mr. Clement has seized upon with such facility, and advanced without having troubled to digest them.

It may be true that during the war years poverty, in the sense in which we know it to-day, had vanished for the time being, and that as a consequence the working classes as a whole were able for a brief period to obtain adequate quantities of food. The vital qualities of that food, however, should not be left out of account. Much of the food that was consumed by the poorer classes during the war years was probably more harmful than nutritious; and the depression below even a pre-war standard of the real wages of vast numbers of workers to-day is not a matter which should have been totally ignored in an article of this description.—Yours, &c.,

J. ALLEN SKINNER.

92, Oakley Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.  
March 24th, 1925.

#### BIRTH-CONTROL.

SIR,—As no other woman has protested in this week's NATION against Mr. Harold Cox's letter of March 7th, I am venturing to do so myself, though I hate to touch such a nauseous subject as that of so-called "Birth-Control."

Possibly Mr. Cox and his associates look upon the taking of life as no more criminal than the prevention of life. But if he still has any prejudice against what is commonly understood by the word "murder," surely he must see that people, and especially doctors, who condone the prevention of life, must sooner or later pass on to the taking of life. There is even greater temptation to take life, if the avoidance of "poverty and suffering" is the main object of their noble profession. It has been noble in the past, largely because, as we lay-people gladly believe, it has resisted the temptation to put patients out of their suffering in the speediest way. The temptation has been resisted, partly, perhaps, from what George Eliot called "the instinct of the Healer"; partly, perhaps, from the knowledge that there could be no halt on such a risky path. But partly, surely, because the wisest men must humbly confess their ignorance of why suffering is allowed at all, and where and when it ceases to be remedial.

Personally, I am illogical enough to look upon *real* "birth-control" as coming under a different category. I mean that individual self-control which refuses to bring children into the world without a reasonable prospect of material sustenance for them. But as regards large families, in whatever class of life, the best personalities are generally members of such, as is likely to be the case. Even a life of extreme struggle is better for a child than being born, brethren-less, with a golden spoon in its mouth. Such a struggle often produces the finest Englishmen, especially amongst "Labour leaders."

One of the ablest of Birmingham surgeons, John W. Taylor, felt strongly on this question. He was also a bit of a poet, and like the author of "Blue Bird," he visualized a baby soul waiting in vain for the life refused to it by human selfishness.

"But all refused him. They would not take  
One burden more.  
The parents hid, for their comfort's sake,  
Behind the door.  
They reasoned in secret: We dare not face  
Misfortune here,  
For ourselves we care, and not for the race  
We fear, we fear."

—Yours, &c.,

A WOMAN.

#### "SIGNIFICANT FORM."

SIR,—As no fewer than three reviewers have strongly objected to my translation of the second line in "Le Serpent"—"La vipère que je vêtis"—will you, of your kindness, allow me to reply in your columns to Mr. Mortimer, as to the most interested and interesting of the three?

Your reviewer says: "To imagine that *vêtir* here means 'to clothe,' and not 'to put on, to don,' seems to me to make nonsense of the whole work."—THE NATION, February 28th.

Now the point at issue in translating this word was quite simple. Does the Satanic Spirit mean "The viper that I donned," or "The viper that I clad"? But, as so often in this complex world of appearances and ideas, the completion of the thought is not so simple.

The thought is certainly more quickly disposed of if we accept the reviewers' reading and say: "The viper whose form I took on":—

"The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy foulds  
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring."

If, on the other hand, we accept, with Monsieur Valéry, my translation as correct, the result is this: "The viper that I clad—with what? With *me*. I wrapped the viper about with my own nature as with a garment—I clothed it with Myself." How can this larger meaning make nonsense of the whole work? Still, since my desire is to extend Valéry's influence, I am more than content that the reader should "go to the French in order to understand the English," and can only remember with amusement the complaint of a French reader recently that "he never understood the French until he read the English"! Perhaps some of the faults of the English might change their coats, as a serpent its skin, if read with a little of the objectivity and patience which your reviewer has so obviously and so admirably brought to the study of the French.

Having inserted my nose in the tent, may I follow with my neck?

Of course, we are all agreed with your reviewer and with Mr. Eliot that the elaboration of a metaphysical concept and the creation of a work of art are two distinct and different activities. But, all the same, it is at least possible that there exists some all-embracing reality, and that that reality is not what we should call reasonable, nor yet to be apprehended by us at present intuitively; and that reason is nevertheless, however tedious an approximation to truth, the method that will ultimately take us closer to reality than any other activity open to us; and, further, that to reach its highest achievements reason must be lifted above itself, or rather accelerated and raised to a higher power of expression, by the emotion whence intuition seems to spring. Only make your metaphysic large enough, and care deeply enough about it, and perhaps it will change into some rich and strange kind of poetry that will include and transcend the methodical production of "un état exceptionnel"—just as Paul Valéry's poetry includes and transcends the sensuality detected by your reviewer.

Being is perhaps a single stuff, one and indivisible, and when we reach, by and through reason, to a state beyond reason, we shall perhaps be in "un état normal," wherein we may directly perceive something of the complexly active unity that is reality—real, ordinary, everyday life as the spirit *ought* to know it (assuming that the spirit exists!). A living poetry should be like successive platforms on a growing scaffolding of metaphysic.—Yours, &c.,

MARK WARDLE.

9, Tufton Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

#### "POEMS OF THIRTY YEARS."

SIR,—I must apologize unreservedly to Mr. Bottomley for the implication that his poems "Atlantis" and "The End of the World" owed anything to the genius of Edward Thomas. That there is an affinity between their bare and haunting mood and the characteristic mood of Thomas is, I think, evident; but (unless the resemblance is fortuitous) it is made chronologically clear by Mr. Bottomley's letter that the influence, if influence there was, must have been exercised by Mr. Bottomley on Thomas, and not *vice versa*.

At the same time I would point out that my observation, although so unfortunately inaccurate, was not made as a criticism. On the contrary, my object was to emphasize that the two poems in question represented Mr. Bottomley's



work at its best and most individual, where whatever literary culture they implied was successfully fused and absorbed into an entirely personal creation, and to contrast this with certain of his poems where the echoes of Keats, Yeats, and Housman appeared to me to overlay the characteristic "grave deep note" which I interpreted as Mr. Bottomley's own recognizable voice.

Since, however, I have inadvertently done Mr. Bottomley an injustice where I most wished to express an appreciation, it only remains for me to hope that he will, of his courtesy, accept this apology in the spirit in which it is tendered—that of an *amende honorable*.—Yours, &c.,

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

#### GIOVANNI VERGA.

SIR,—I suggest that Mr. Edwin Muir, in his review of Mr. Lawrence's translation of Verga's "Mastro-Don Gesualdo," was indulging in those hasty generalizations which are born to us all out of inadequate knowledge. I question his knowledge of Verga's best work in original, and I am sorry that any Italian critic should see it said, in an English paper which stands for high intelligence, that the author of "Jeli il Pastore," "Pane Nero," and "I Malavoglia," "would probably have been a great writer."

However, my intention is not to discuss a question of taste, but to correct statements of fact. As Mr. Muir will see, if he consults Luigi Russo's monograph on Verga (Naples: Ricciardi, 1920), Verga was never head of any revolt. Though Capuana and others used his name as a weapon in the battle for "realism," he entirely refused to take any interest in what he regarded as sterile controversies. The great Sicilian stories of his maturity, moreover, date round the years 1880-83, with "Mastro-Don Gesualdo" (1888) as a pendant. D'Annunzio's lusciousness had not then begun, and after 1888 Verga hardly wrote anything of importance. If anything, he himself made a slight return to romanticism. So far from seeing in "Vita dei Campi" and "Novelle Rusticane" an "extreme reaction," I agree with Professor Croce in seeing a genuinely artistic inspiration. In his article on Verga ("La Letteratura della Nuova Italia") he entirely explodes the notion of Verga's "verismo."—Yours, &c.,

ORLO WILLIAMS.

March 17th, 1925.

[Mr. Edwin Muir replies:—

"Mr. Williams's letter is chiefly irrelevant. He says nothing to invalidate my main contention, which was that

Verga, although a talented writer, was not a great one. That is still my opinion, and it is founded on the reasons I gave in my review. On the minor points which Mr. Williams touches, I find little reason for modifying what I said. I am obliged to him for pointing out that Verga could not have reacted against D'Annunzio. But lusciousness is not a quality confined, in Italian literature, to D'Annunzio. It existed in Leopardi's time, as we learn from his correspondence, and it exists, quite apart from D'Annunzio, in our own. As for the other point on which Mr. Williams sets me right: there can be no two opinions that, far more truly than any of the advocates of "verismo," Verga was "the head of the Italian revolt against Italian romanticism." In other words, he was the chief anti-romantic creative writer in Italy in his time, and all the more powerful by his refusal "to take any interest in what he regarded as sterile controversies." All this, indeed, is the commonplace of literary history. What conceivable bearing the remainder of Mr. Williams's letter has on my review I confess I cannot discover."]

#### TOLSTOY ON ART.

SIR,—Mr. Clive Bell goes from bad to worse. His original statement that Tolstoy condemns "King Lear" because "the play is indecent" may have been merely a careless blunder, but his revised statement that what Tolstoy complains of is its "vulgarity" must, I think, be reckoned as deliberate misrepresentation, for, on looking up the sentence he refers to, I find the word "vulgarity" only used in the passing phrase "not to speak of the vulgarity of these words," before Tolstoy proceeds to show, on quite other grounds, why they are out of place in Gloucester's mouth. This again is only the beginning of a closely reasoned and sustained criticism of our national idol, made in full consciousness of the overpowering tradition of reverence for Shakespeare in which, in school and out of school, we have all been drilled, or as Tolstoy puts it "hypnotized."

It is to be hoped that some serious and well-reasoned reply to Tolstoy will some day be forthcoming from someone competent to make it, but there is as yet no indication of its appearance. Meanwhile, those who wish to "poke fun" at "the great writer of the Russian land" should do so by other methods than those of misrepresentation and misquotation.—Yours, &c.,

AYLMER MAUDE.

Great Baddow, Chelmsford.

## LANDMARKS IN MODERN ART

### IV.—DELACROIX.\*

By CLIVE BELL.

SO impressive is his position in the history of modern art that it is difficult to judge Delacroix on his merits. Unquestionably they are high; yet I cannot rate them quite so high as they are rated by contemporary French opinion. He seems to me a good but hardly a great artist. On the other hand, he is certainly one of the pillars of nineteenth-century painting; while at the age of thirty, or less, he was recognized by friends and foes alike as chief of the romantic school. This honour he neither coveted nor enjoyed: to the end of his days he disclaimed the title of "romantic," and so far was he from ambitioning the rôle of chief that he refused even to open a studio.

If I do not call him great, that is because his pictures do not move me as do those of the great. May be my sensibility is at fault; all I can say is that to me his forms and colours never give what those of Ingres or Courbet or Renoir or Matisse, for instance, give often—the grand thrill of ecstasy and surprise. They seem to lack that magical beauty, implicit perhaps in the forms of nature, but only to be evoked by great artists—that beauty which, without the revelation of the

masters, had remained to most unknown, that always surprising and never quite explicable beauty which works of art alone can offer, and which, whenever experienced, adds a new and exciting ingredient to that queer mixture men call life. The pictures of Delacroix seem to add nothing; they do but refer the mind back to things already experienced. That these things are of the subtlest and most exquisite goes without saying; but the appreciation of them is a work of collaboration, not the enjoyment of a divine gift fallen mysteriously from the skies.

Delacroix's art is essentially literary; for literary qualities it was admired during his life, and for them, in my opinion—an opinion which will vex, I fear, some of our best critics—it has been admired ever since. When I say that he was literary, I do not mean that he was coarsely so in the manner beloved of the people. Look at that picture in the National Gallery of the Magdalene setting out to visit the tomb by Savoldo. It is fine painting, as is most of Delacroix's work, but its appeal is not purely, nor mainly even, plastic, not chiefly for its line and colour is it so greatly, and so justly, admired. The Magdalene is unmistakably a *fille repentie*. An instinctive coquettishness appears beneath the decent

\* Part I. appeared in THE NATION of November 21st, 1924; Part II. on January 3rd, 1925; and Part III. on February 21st.

grey cloak which instinct, lying inoffensive but alert, has arranged so prettily; while the gracious gesture with which she holds it up betrays a refined but unsubdued temperament. Also, though she is going in all reverence and humility to the tomb of her divine master, one cannot but feel, as one is meant to feel, that she has something of the air of going to a rendezvous. The theme could be elaborated were elaboration to the purpose: it is not, because here I am concerned only to illustrate what I mean by the better sort of "literariness." Such literariness, unless I mistake, is the quality in which Delacroix excelled, and for which he was, and is, most admired.

His magnificent champion, Baudelaire, was, though he tried sometimes to conceal the fact from himself, in his heart under no illusions. Always it is for subtle literary qualities that he praises his hero most convincingly:—

"Une autre qualité, très-grande, très-vaste, du talent de M. Delacroix, et qui fait de lui le peintre aimé des poètes, c'est qu'il est essentiellement littéraire. Non seulement sa peinture a parcouru, toujours avec succès, le champ des hautes littératures, non-seulement elle a fréquenté Arioste, Byron, Dante, Walter Scott, Shakespeare, mais elle sait révéler des idées d'un ordre plus élevé, plus fines, plus profondes que la plupart des peintures modernes."—"Curiosités Esthétiques," 242.)

He adds that, at the master's funeral, the chief mourners were men of letters. Goethe's fine compliment was provoked by the literary qualities of his illustrations: "I must admit," says the sage to Eckermann on November 29th, 1826, "that myself I had not represented the scene (Faust and Mephistopheles galloping past the gibbet) so perfectly." He goes on to opine that the genius of Delacroix is manifest in the fact that he compels the reader to conceive the scene as he (the artist) imagines it; and adds, "M. Delacroix has surpassed in intensity the pictures I had made in my own mind even." For once Goethe's art-criticism is to the point: Delacroix's most remarkable gift being a power of transposing literary conceptions into a visual medium. On a small scale he did for the ideas of poets and novelists what Shakespeare did for Plutarch and the English chronicles. Only, whereas one transposed literature into good painting, the other converted history into supreme poetry.

Delacroix had the character and temperament of a man of letters, and that remarkable journal of his, published in 1893, is, especially in its later and more elaborate parts, more the work of a writer than of a painter jotting down his fancies and reflections. He was witty, fastidious and cultivated, fond of argument and brilliant in argument, utterly contemptuous of "les gens de métier"—the painters who understood their job and understood nothing else. Incidentally, he was in youth something of a dandy, one of a little band which made it its business to import the latest English fashions. He was profoundly sceptical, noting in his journal (1849) "Je crois . . . qu'on peut affirmer que le progrès doit amener nécessairement, non pas un progrès plus grand encore, mais à la fin négation du progrès, retour au point d'où on est parti." And in his tastes, especially his taste in books—with which in view of his rather stay-at-home habits we may suppose him more extensively acquainted than with pictures even\*—he was classical. His admiration for Virgil, Racine and Boileau, for Raphael and the Greeks, must have puzzled sorely his romantic followers, to whom these names were anathema.

How then did he come to be chief of the romantic school? To answer that question completely one would have to discover what, about the year 1830, was meant

by Romanticism—matter of itself for an essay. Here we need observe only that, though Delacroix was undisputed chief of the school, he never admitted that he was romantic. To be sure, the chief of a school rarely is of that or any other school. He is himself. Schools are for those who have to be someone else. One groups artists on account of similarities; the more personal and original the more will they tend to escape classification. The qualities which a score of artists have in common are not likely to be the most interesting that they possess; and most of those held in common by the romantics were not only uninteresting but horrid. If Delacroix must be put to school at all it should be with Constable and Géricault in the school of colourists—a school of which the common characteristics were at any rate artistic and honourable. In that school he acquired two excellent habits which differentiate all he did from Davidian productions. He learnt to substitute mass for silhouette; and he learnt to conceive of composition as a balance of movements rather than as something static. This was to fly full in the face of Winckelmann's *beau idéal*, to break sharply indeed with the frozen calm of the Greeks and Romans.

Delacroix was against the neo-classical school or, at any rate, the school was against Delacroix; by that fact alone he became a romantic, as Romanticism was understood in the days of Charles X. "Quiconque," says Huet, "quiconque ne faisait pas des Soldats de Marathon était romantique." Everyone who has read a word of history, who has read the papers for that matter, knows that under a crushing tyranny—and the tyranny of the school was crushing—all shades of dissident opinion—whig, liberal, radical, socialist—tend to merge in a common opposition. After the death of Géricault, Delacroix was the most eminent of opposition painters; by the opposition therefore he was saluted "chief." Was he not abused more violently than anyone else by the officials? How he was abused! "C'était un sauvage, un barbare, un maniaque, un enragé, un fou. . . . Il avait le goût du laid, de l'ignoble, du monstrueux; et puis il ne savait pas dessiner. . . . Il jetait des sceaux de couleur contre la toile, il peignait avec un balai ivre—ce balai ivre parut très-joli et fit en son temps un effet énorme." (Gautier: "Histoire du Romantisme.") It would seem incredible that the established critics, the bigwigs and high functionaries of the profession, should have used such language of the third painter of their age, had not the same people said the same things about every original artist who appeared during the nineteenth century; had we not heard them with our own ears bellowing comparable nonsense at Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso.

Delacroix stood for liberty—members of persecuted oppositions generally do. Even socialists are in favour of free speech until they get into power. Delacroix was consistent and honest. He defended the rights of Courbet, with whose art he had very little sympathy, before the jury of the *salon*; and Jules Breton tells us how superbly impressive he was when he spoke of individual liberty and the duty of respecting unfamiliar tendencies. We have no news of that sort from Russia, I think. So, though Delacroix may be claimed for the romantic movement on account of his descent from the revolutionary colourists, and on account of his early subjects, often dramatic, not to say violent, and drawn mostly from modern (*i.e.*, non-classical) history and literature, it is above all on account of his passion for artistic independence that he belongs to "the left." It is this firm and passionate belief in individualism which, more than anything else, makes him, not only a master, but a hero of modern painting.

\* Delacroix never visited Italy, Spain, or Holland. His expeditions to Morocco and England are classic; he once made a flying visit to Brussels and Antwerp.



## THE LITTLE GENTLEMAN IN A RED COAT.

By FRANCES PITT.

IN the strenuous world that has its being among the undergrowth of hedgebank and ditch lives a little gentleman in a red coat; a neat, dainty person, with a spotless white waistcoat, and the most delicate of wee hands. His eyes are dark and bright, like wet black beads, his coat is sleek and well groomed, and he has long quivering whiskers. He is indeed a dandy, an exquisite little dandy, in his jacket of russet red, which is just the shade of red clay as it is seen between the plant stems.

And this little gentleman, who is he? He is but a mouse, the British Bank Vole, *Evotomys glareolus britannicus*, one of the dwellers in the hedgebank jungle.

He is aptly named the red bank vole, or mouse, for not only is he red, but he loves the hedgebanks, wooded places, &c., and leaves the vast plains of the open meadows to that rough, furry plebeian person the field vole. The latter, his distant cousin, is of a much duller hue, his ears are almost buried in his fur, and he has not that sharp, alert look so characteristic of the bank vole.

The latter, as I have said, does not like the open spaces, but prefers the shelter of hedges and bushes. Deep beneath the grass, ferns, ivy, primroses, and the hundred and one plants that clothe the banks and carpet our woodlands, run tunnels in all directions; highways linking ditch and bush, along which tiny feet twinkle as their owners rush by on hurried expeditions. These "runs" are the common property of shrews, long-tailed mice, and last but not least the bank vole, who travels along the shaded ways as we travel beneath the tall, over-arching trees in an ancient forest. To the small creatures that use these roads the world must be a wonderful and mysterious place, with the possibilities of great adventure in the odoriferous gloom of its green and shadowy depths. Love and battle, danger and sudden death, lurk in its tunnels, in these holes and pathways that are the bank vole's universe.

Somewhere beneath an old tree stump, or down a mole hole, our friend of the red coat has his home, wherein he has made a warm nest, a bed of shredded grass and leaves, carried there, mouthful by mouthful, from the realm above. Here he dwells, snugly tucked away, in peace and comfort, save when the spirit urges him to wander forth; then it is that tiny scufflings and the pattering of wee feet are heard, as he hurries down his alleys. Off he goes, quivering with life, whiskers agog, full of affairs, and intent on this, that, and the other—on the fallen acorns from last autumn's crop, on the hips shining crimson on the bushes. He has a great liking for the latter, and often climbs aloft for them, when you may see the remnants of his feast in some old disused bird's nest. Full to the brim it will be with crimson and orange fragments, showing how the tiny marauder carried his booty there to eat it on a secure platform. These dining-tables are also used by the long-tailed mice, so we must not accuse the red mouse of having eaten all the hips that have been stripped from the bushes—still, he takes his share, and being more diurnal in his habits than other mice and voles, no doubt takes more than his share. He seeks his food not only by night, but also by day. It is by no means uncommon to see a bank vole scuttling about in daylight, but the true mice stay at home until dark.

Our friend of the red coat is not only hard working in his search for food, but is also provident in his habits, and likes to lay by a store. I once kept three bank voles in a cage in order to watch their ways, and found that one of the most marked traits in their characters was the hoarding instinct. All food not immediately required was carefully buried. It must be explained that the cage was furnished with several inches of soil, stones, and turf, to say nothing of grass and leaves for bedding, so that their surroundings were as natural as possible. Their behaviour was most amusing; when one of the bank mice found fresh food, it ate what it could and hid the rest. If some grain had been put in, the vole that discovered it would look round with an anxious air, as if afraid its companions would want to share the treasure, and then begin business, bearing the corn off, a mouthful at a time, perhaps down some ready-made tunnel, or perhaps placing it in a hole scratched on purpose. Such holes were always carefully filled up when the business was finished. How hard the mice could and would work is shown by some of the notes I made. One vole removed seventy-five grains of barley in eighteen journeys, doing this in fifteen minutes. But another worked even harder; in the space of ten minutes it carried off twenty-one loads, removing ninety-one grains altogether. Its average was rather less than three grains per journey, but sometimes it contrived to stuff more into its mouth. The biggest load I saw taken away was one of seven pieces of corn, when the vole's cheeks did indeed bulge.

Despite their hard work, it seemed to be a case of out of sight, out of mind, with the mice, and they seldom reopened their hoards save by accident; most of the buried grain sprouted and made little forests of green in the cage. Of course, in a wild state hunger might sharpen their memories, but close observation left me with the impression that these voles were actuated by an innate desire to hide what they could not eat, rather than by an intention of making provision for a "rainy day"; in short, that it was "instinct" which was the impelling factor. Yet they had no small meed of intelligence, but in the smaller creatures we often find instinctive behaviour so mixed with intelligent action that it is hard to tell where one begins and the other ends. When watching these mice I often wondered what their outlook on life was—did they worry at all about the morrow? Or did they live almost entirely for the moment? If their memory is but short, one would suspect the latter. Our prodigious brain powers are almost entirely due to memory, it is memory of the past that enables us to look forward; so if these tiny creatures have but short memories, then their troubles and fears are fleeting, and the paralyzing terror caused by the shadow of a hawk's wing will be forgotten in the joy of finding good food.

To return to my bank voles, which were three in number: they were fascinating little people, with individuality and personality, often quarrelling bitterly over treasure trove, when they fought, rearing up on their hind legs, and hitting each other with their paws like little boxers; after which they would retire to opposite corners of the cage to wash their faces, passing little handlike paws over their heads at lightning speed. They were most particular about their toilets, washing frequently, and dressing their jackets with the greatest care. No wonder they were always neat and smart!

These three were, of course, specimens of the common British bank vole, which is a sub-species peculiar to Great Britain. *Britannicus* differs from the Continental forms of *E. glareolus* in being smaller and darker in colour; yet we have a large, brightly coloured

bank vole here; for on a small island off the Welsh coast occurs a distinct species. Skomer Island, a paltry nine hundred or so acres in extent, has a fine large bank vole of its own, *E. skomerensis*, which is found nowhere else in the world, but, allowing for all its differences, it is much like our bank mouse; a little gentleman in a red coat.

## THE DRAMA

### "WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!"

Everyman Theatre: "The Painted Swan."  
By Princess Bibesco.

THERE are many reasons why Princess Bibesco's play should meet with a sympathetic hearing from the public. It is always a matter for rejoicing when those who might pass their lives in social and financial comfort, voluntarily incommode themselves with the manacles of literature. Further, such writers have many advantages over the oily denizens of Grub Street. For they can bring into their works a freshness, an amateurishness in the best sense of the word, at the worst a new angle of vision, which will separate them agreeably from the overworked journeymen of letters. However much we may criticize these volunteers in the army of literature, we shall always wish to be amused and hate to be unappreciative.

Everyone therefore will be sympathetic to Princess Bibesco's first venture in the hardest of all literary mediums. Much will be forgiven to a young, hard-working, and enthusiastic woman who writes because she wants to and for no other reason. She has chosen for study the social stratum with which she is best acquainted, that where the *beau monde* impinges on the *monde politique*, a world much treated by Grub Street, but here described by one who should be to the manner born. Here she is wise; for it is best to write from one's own experience. But the curious feature of "The Painted Swan" is that it is best where one would have expected failure and worst where one might have anticipated success.

Princess Bibesco sets out to contrast the army of imperipient chatterboxes, "who help on the general degradation of humanity," with those few who in every walk of life are capable of sincerity and strong feeling. This is a tribute to the authoress's own nature, the excellence of which shines out through the whole play. When she is simple and straightforward she is best. Far the most moving passage in the play is certainly towards the end of Act I., where Ann (Miss Edith Evans) is caught between her romantic young adorer (Mr. R. Harris) and the other lover who is already sick to death of her. "If only we could love where we wish to love!" remarks her heroine with real feeling. Here Princess Bibesco writes from the heart, and she endows the play with a certain ingenuous freshness. For this we can forgive much, the absence of constructional power, the inconsistency of the character-drawing, the apparent vagueness of the authoress as to what she means the characters to be, and even the doubt as to whether she means anything. For instance, everyone says Ann is a saint (she works very hard in the parish); and yet we are never certain she did not marry her disagreeable husband merely because he had £50,000 a year. Again, this same husband, after having been painted a monster of insensibility, is revealed at the last moment as the only person in the play who ever understood what was passing in his wife's mind.

All these are grave, indeed fatal, flaws in "The Painted Swan," but they are faults which can be forgiven, because they can be remedied with practice. Far graver is the essential commonplaceness of vision and the indefatigable desire to be witty. The authoress, in her wish not to be cynical, becomes merely sentimental, and the clumsiness of her heroine alienates a sympathy

which is transferred to the man who jilts her. The romantic attitude towards Love with a large L, is astonishing in its naiveté. Still more fatiguing are the continual volleys of epigram, which crackle even from the lips of the butler. We are stunned by the succession of *bons mots* which, the authoress tells us, recall the eighteenth century, and are indeed reminiscent of Sheridan's more tiresome passages. The authoress was not helped by the producer; still, impatience was inevitable. This "wit" divorced from all reality has been the ruin of the English drama ever since Sheridan; nor is Princess Bibesco particularly adept in a faded genre. She might do better than imitate Henry Arthur Jones. Sometimes she feels this herself. "Only stupid people fear being obvious," remarks one of her characters with perfect truth. The authoress herself is best when she is "obvious," for she is evidently capable of understanding deep feelings and writing simply about them. Unfortunately, just when we are warming up, a cold douche of epigram is immediately turned on from the hose-pipes always ready in the wings.

As I said before, the production was poor, and so, on the whole, was the acting. But no amount of skill could have hidden the artificiality with which Princess Bibesco chose, quite unnecessarily, to clothe her play. It is to be hoped that next time she will allow her own natural disposition to have a better run for its money.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, March 28.—Orchestral Concert for children, at 11, at Central Hall.

Lamond, Pianoforte Recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

Sunday, March 29.—"The Verge," Pioneer Players, at Regent Theatre.

Miss Maude Royden on "The Religious Genius of the West," at 5, at Indian Students' Union.

Monday, March 30.—"Tarnish," at the Vaudeville.

"Charlot's Revue," at the Prince of Wales.

"Adam and Eve," at "Q" Theatre.

Lamb Centenary Dinner, at Inner Temple Hall, at 7.

Tuesday, March 31.—"The Sea Urchin," at the Strand.

Martha Baird, Pianoforte Recital, at 8.15, at Æolian Hall.

Erzsi Breiner, Pianoforte Recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.

Dulcie Bowie, Recital of Poetry, at 8.30, at Wigmore Hall.

Thursday, April 2.—Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, at 8, at Queen's Hall.

## IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

FACES irresolute and unperplexed—

Unspeculative faces, bored and weak,

Cruise past each patient victory of technique,

Dimly desiring to enjoy the next

Yet never finding what they seem to seek.

Here blooms, recedes, and glows before their eyes

A quintessential world preserved in paint;

Calm vistas of long-vanished Paradise,

And ripe remembrances of sage and saint;

The immortality of changeless skies,

And all bright legends of Time's creation . . .

Yet I observe no gestures of surprise

From those who straggle in to patronize

The Art Collection of the English Nation.

CYPRINOID.



## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## THE LAST WORD IN CRIME.

THERE is a great deal of cant written and talked by the good and the wise about crime, crime books, detective novels, *causes célèbres*, and the police court news. Of course, crime and the queer, passionate, or sordid dramas unravelled in the law courts are more interesting than the regular and completely uneventful lives of our eminently respectable neighbours. If "they married and lived happily ever afterwards," you can have no tragedy of "Othello"; if you live like Queen Victoria, you will not die like King Lear; if there are no Hildas in the world, you will not have elderly gentlemen meeting a violent end by climbing towers. The thoughts, passions, and acts of the Iagos, Othellos, Lears, Hildas, and Master Builders are intensely interesting and dramatic, and it is cant to pretend that it is merely morbid to take an interest in their humbler imitators in real life and the law courts. I will add this: that, if you really want to see the level of civilization which a nation has attained at any time, you should examine its laws, its crimes, its punishments, its scandals, and, above all, the verbatim reports of its criminal and civil cases. Personally, I never realized how civilized or uncivilized we are until, as a juror at the Old Bailey, I listened to Mr. Justice Avory trying cases.

I am, therefore, not ashamed to say that I found "The Crime and Trial of Leopold and Loeb," by Maureen McKernan (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.), an absorbing and remarkable book. Most people have heard of how, last year in Chicago, Nathan Leopold, aged nineteen, and Richard Loeb, aged eighteen, the sons of two millionaires, kidnapped and murdered Bobby Franks, aged fourteen, a neighbour and acquaintance. It was the last word in crime, because, judged by the ordinary standards of human mentality and conduct, it was motiveless. The only motive was the crime itself, or, if you like to follow Mr. McKernan, "the thrill and adventure involved in their deed." The bare story of the "deed" is remarkable. The two youths were above the average in intelligence and had done very well at college. Their families were respectable and respected, and extremely wealthy. They had everything which money could buy. They were close friends, and they seem to have made up their minds to work out and execute "a perfect crime." The original plan seems to have been to kidnap the son of a rich man and demand a ransom of 10,000 dollars, but very early they decided that the scheme could not be successful unless the boy was murdered. The plan was worked out down to the last detail, the only detail which was left undecided being the victim. What they actually did was this. They hung about one day in a motor-car looking for a likely victim. After a time they saw Bobby Franks, who was a friend of Loeb's, walking along the street. They got him to come with them in the car, and, as they drove along, they killed him by striking him on the head with a chisel. They drove to an open piece of deserted and marshy ground on the south of Chicago, and pushed the body into a culvert. They then wrote a letter in the name of George Johnson to Mr. Franks, the boy's father, demanding a ransom of \$10,000, and giving detailed instructions of the elaborate way in which it should be paid. Mr. Franks was actually engaged in carrying out these instructions when the news arrived that some workmen had discovered the body of his son. Near the body was found a pair of spectacles, which the police succeeded

in tracing to Leopold. This led to the arrest of Leopold and Loeb, and subsequently to a full confession by them.

When the trial came on the two accused pleaded guilty, and the only question was whether the Court would sentence them to death or to imprisonment for life. The defence was debarred by the plea of guilty from pleading insanity, but it called medical evidence to show that, although neither of the accused was legally insane in the sense of not being responsible for his actions, yet they were psychologically so abnormal as to be morally insane. The trial caused enormous excitement in Chicago and America. Mr. McKernan's book gives in detail the statements and examination of the two youths, the reports of the mental specialists on both sides, the speeches for the defence and prosecution. It gives a remarkable picture of the psychology and civilization of Chicago. The study of the psychology of Leopold and Loeb, with their silliness and cleverness, their vulgarity, their ruthless lack of ordinary emotion, and their fantastic determination to be Nietzschean and supermen, is fascinating, and to say that one's interest in it is merely "morbid" seems to me nonsense. But even more interesting to me is the way in which the speeches of the defence and prosecution reveal American mentality and civilization. In the speeches and in the whole trial there is a curious mixture of what to us must seem childishness with great social and judicial enlightenment. What could be more childish than the pomposity with which the judge orders to be "stricken from the record the closing remarks of the State's Attorney as being a cowardly and dastardly assault upon the honour of the court"? The closing remarks were merely a reference to the fact that one witness had given evidence (almost certainly not true) of a remark of Leopold's that he "would plead guilty before a friendly judge." And yet despite this childish simplicity and the garish vulgarity of the "sensational" newspaper men, the crowds of spectators, the accused, and the speeches for defence and prosecution, I am left with the impression that the accused in this case had a fairer trial than they would have had in any other country of the world. Fairer in the sense that there was a real attempt to investigate the psychology of the murderers. Both in the medical evidence and in the speeches the facts and theories of modern science were discussed seriously, not laughed at and dismissed as sheer nonsense as nine times out of ten is the case in our own courts. It may be, of course, that such a state of affairs is as rare in Chicago, as it is at the Old Bailey. But certainly the result in this case is that neither the court nor the reader can be left in any doubt as to the exact psychology of the two accused—surely a rare event in a criminal case of this kind.

It should, perhaps, be added that both the prosecuting and defending counsel employed a violence and virulence of statement which were greater than what English courts are accustomed to. Certainly Mr. Crowe, the State's Attorney, pressed for the death penalty with a persistency and vindictiveness which would hardly be tolerated by our traditions. There is little doubt that he had public feeling behind him, and it is therefore all the more significant that the verdict was penal servitude for life.

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## THE FIRST FOLIO.

**Studies in the First Folio.** Written for the Shakespeare Association by M. H. SPIELMANN, J. DOVER WILSON, Sir SIDNEY LEE, R. CROMPTON RHODES, W. W. GREG and ALLARDYCE NICOLL. With an Introduction by Sir ISRAEL GOLLANCZ. (Milford. 18s.)

It is all very well to sneer at, and even sometimes to be indignant with, "Facts and Figures" as a cry. But when the facts are interesting facts and the figures belong, not to the Sciences of Arithmetic and Mathematics, but to the Arts of Design, both can be very graciously given and should be very thankfully accepted. This is certainly the case with the book before us. Its component parts are papers read at this or that meeting, held two years ago, in commemoration of the appearance of the First Folio—the "First," in one if not in another sense, of all profane folios. But its matter has not got stale in these two years, though twentieth-century things have rather a habit of rapid staling: and is not likely to get stale in two hundred, which is a good deal more than can be said of most books on Shakespeare. Naturally, indeed unavoidably, some of the papers possess more of this spirit of vitality and some of them less. But this difference itself corresponds, more or less directly, to the difference in kind of facts and of figures referred to in our opening sentence. For instance—we may fairly confine ourselves to favourable instances in such a notice as this—Sir Sidney Lee's revised history of the *corpora*—far from *vilia*—of the folio itself, and Mr. Spielmann's discussion, with some forty or fifty large and careful reproductions, of the actual portraits, are not susceptible of staleness, though the former may be susceptible of continuation: not, one rather hopes than expects, as a continuous history of "going West."

If we dwell chiefly on the portraits it is for a pretty sufficient reason, indicated though not unduly stressed by Mr. Spielmann himself—the extraordinary untrustworthiness of the reproduction of such things. It would be one of the good millionaire's freaks, though he would have to endow continuance as well as furnish first expense, to get together *all* the reproductions of the original presentments down to the present day and onwards. A hasty person may say, "Photography has cured the antics of some engravers and the carelessness of others." Has it? It does not of course permit, or admit, such pure liberties as are shown here in side-by-side reproduction of the unimproved and improved states of the so-called Felton portrait or the still more amazing cases of Locatelli's "Chandos" and Dunkarton's "Janssen." But it admits of faulty focusing, faulty exposing, and a dozen more crimes incident to photography or photographers. In these half-hundred reproductions of Mr. Spielmann's we have certainly careful, and, one may trust, faithful presentments of the Effigy, the Droeshout, and the Chandos in all sorts of states and earlier and later copies. These include Blake's famous vision of Shakespeare as he "saw" him (which, allowing for the different senses of "saw," the present reviewer would bet on as probably the truest we have) and some modern inventions; also some interesting figures of contemporaries to explain costume, attitude, &c. Readers may of course agree or disagree with this or that comment or opinion of Mr. Spielmann's. But the value—the really extraordinary value—of the thing lies in the copious, the practically exhaustive supply of material on which they may comment, opine, and judge for themselves. Everybody cannot even go to Stratford; still less can everybody buy a first folio in perfect state for himself. But everybody can compare these varied reproductions of the two presentments and (if he can supply the brains needed) put together the enigma of the smile in the one and the enigma of the more solemn face in the other.

The "figures" of Sir Sidney Lee's article are, of course, of the less attractive and purely arithmetical kind; but they are curious and interesting enough in their procession from single pounds to thousands. A hasty person may say, "Oh! why didn't I live when a folio could be got for a five-pound note or less?" But would he have given it? Did he, when he might have done so, subscribe for the Kelmescott Chaucer, which was a certain "rise"? Probably

not. One would fain emulate Sir Sidney's equanimity at the steady drain of copies to America; but it is rather difficult. To blame the sellers would be absurd, and in many cases cruel; they can't help themselves. Nor can one find fault with the buyers, except that the multiplication of copies in the same hands seems to require some justification. But, after all, it keeps them perhaps safer than if they were held singly. The real subject for regret, and perhaps something harsher, is that our own quick-getters do not affect this form of lavish spending.

The remaining articles—Mr. Dover Wilson's reconstruction-defence (as we may call it) of Heminge and Condell; Mr. Crompton Rhodes's "Folio and Stage"; Mr. Greg's "Folio and Publishers"; and Mr. Allardyce Nicoll's "Folio to Malone," to shorten their titles—have perhaps a little less of general, if a little more of special or specialist interest. But they are all expert, and all deserving of consideration. In the first three, at any rate, one certainly sometimes remembers that, as Mr. Greg himself says shrewdly and perhaps a little drily, "Of course, people's notions of evidence differ." Indeed, there are questions mooted here the answer to which is very considerably affected by a difference in notions of evidence, as well as in conclusions from evidence in itself not disallowed. Mr. Allardyce Nicoll has rather plainer sailing. But no sensible reader would cut out any of the four—much less Sir Israel Gollancz's Introduction, with more interesting facts, divers facsimiles, and a substantial record of the writer's recent discovery of lines to the editors of the Folio by one (it is not certain which) of the Salusburys of Llewenny. In fact, this Introduction, like the two articles on which we have chiefly dwelt, is what the late Dr. Grosart used to call "factful and matterful" to the factfullest and matterfullest extent. Not that the others are factless and matterless by any means; but in the nature of their cases there is more room, and indeed call, for argument; room, if not positive call, even for a little conjecture.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

## THE SIRENS.

**The Sirens: an Ode.** By LAURENCE BINYON. (Chelsfield, Kent: Stanton Press. 31s. 6d.)

MR. BINYON'S new poem is, I believe, as sure of survival as any poem of our time that I have read. Different in kind and in quality from anything its author has written before, it will necessitate revision of every estimate of his achievement. He has written other poems in language that, to this reviewer at least, often seemed not quite animated, poems that left in the memory only a rather blurred impression of poetic words. But this time Mr. Binyon has won a magnificent victory. He has chosen for his subject a vast idea that easily eludes the net of words; and he has found expression for it in a form of clear-cut, memorable beauty. There is a lure, a singing of sirens, that somehow persuades man, whatever his job, that effort is worth making, even though, for all he knows, heaven and earth may be wiped away to-morrow. Even the most assured, the "masters of the known and found," hear a call

"Not to stay, not to stay,  
But to embark for the outer dark."

Even the conquerors, such as Alexander, or

"Ravens Ghengis, hot Timour,  
And the empire-storming Saracen,  
Fate's infuriate charioteers  
Fly from a whisper in their ears  
(Earth before them, Time behind)  
Whispering, 'Haste, ere blood be chill,  
Storm and scatter, work your will!'  
Hunters hunted in the mind,  
Hunting what they cannot name,  
Thunder over earth to find  
Nothing."

So man leaves his home for the sea, conquers mountain summits, the air itself, and wins his victories in the arts and sciences; the Sirens still lure him on, till he is deafened with the hammering of his own machines and has blackened the earth, even the sky. Still he persists, "Maker but half aware of what he makes"; and lovers still rejoice:—

"They have made virgin words of that soiled alphabet  
Wherewith have been written histories of sorrow."



And so the book continues, transmuting into poetry the ideas of creative evolution, without becoming grandiose or vague, till it ends with a splendid asseveration of faith in the potentialities of the brief eternal human creature.

It is remarkable that a work of such varied and unconventional metrical design should command such complete confidence in its rhythm: the thirty-eight pages can be read straight through for the first time without fear of misplacing a stress (except in one line on page 33 where a solitary misprint has added an extra syllable). Listening, say, to the cadences of the "Song of Solomon" or to the choruses in "Samson," or to the simple tune of Hodgson's "Song of Honour," one can surrender immediately to the musician's authority: and here, too, one feels the assurance that all will go well with the sound. Instead of making rhyme cheap by incessant use, Mr. Binyon has skilfully reserved it so that when it appears it can make its full effect. Here, for instance, is a paragraph about the sunken ships summoned up from the floor of the sea:—

"I saw them clouding up over the verge,  
Ghosts that arose out of an unknown grave,  
Strange to the buoyant seas that young they rode upon,  
And strange to the idle glitter of the wave.  
Magically rebuilt, rigged and manned,  
They stole in their slow beauty toward the land.  
Mariners, O mariners!  
I heard a voice cry; Home, come home!  
Here is the rain-fresh earth; leaf-changing seasons; here  
Spring the flowers; and here, older than memory, peace  
Tastes on the air sweet as honey in the honeycomb.  
Smells not the hearth-smoke better than spices of India?  
Are not children's kisses dearer than ivory and pearls?  
And sleep in the hill kinder than nameless water  
And the cold, wandering foam?"

The only obstacle to the immediate recognition of "The Sirens" seems to be its present price: not many of those who care about poetry can easily afford a guinea and a half for some thirty pages of poetry that they have not read. The book is finely printed by hand at the Stanton Press, on hand-made paper, and appreciation of the poem is, of course, much helped by such worthy presentment: book-collectors would be wise to lay in the two hundred copies if they have not done so already, for "The Sirens" will not be forgotten soon. The printing of the first page is marred, in our opinion, by an ornamental border which constricts the lines and interrupts the launching of the poem: and the few ornate capitals are not easy to read. Apart from that, the setting is beautiful and very easy to read. But it is to be hoped that a cheaper edition will soon bring the book within reach of a much wider public: for it is a masterpiece in its kind—a kind rarely attempted in our day.

W. A. F.

#### IMITATIONS OF HUMAN NATURE.

**A Comedy Royal.** By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Privately printed; 275 Signed Copies. (Werner-Laurie. 21s.)

**Two Plays.** By SEAN O'CASEY. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)

**His Majesty's Pleasure.** By CONAL O'RIORDAN. Contemporary British Dramatists. (Benn. 5s.)

**The Translation of Nathaniel Bendersnap.** By GEORGE DUNNING GRIBBLE. Contemporary British Dramatists. (Benn. 5s.)

"A PLAY," remarked one of four gentlemen being rowed upon the Thames to hear the Dutch guns bombarding Sheerness, "a play is a just and lively imitation of human nature." Each word of the phrase contains enough controversial matter for a volume: yet if we keep in our minds the sort of thing the speaker meant, it does not serve so badly as a rough test.

Of what "His Majesty's Pleasure" may be an imitation it is difficult to guess. The characters—Henri IV., the Princess de Condé, lords, soldiers, innkeepers, and peasants—act on some system of emotional reaction as yet unknown to nature. These persons are not so real as Puck, nor as the characters of Regnard or Marivaux, nor as Gozzi's fantasies or Ibsen's trolls, who all speak things of human significance: they do not even speak as children. Nor is it clear what the play is about: "the life of comedy is in the

idea," and the idea in this play is just about as palpable as the core of Peer Gynt's onion. Only in one respect has this book any interest. Mr. O'Riordan realizes that stage speech is something peculiar. His knowledge has often led him into unconscious blank verse (e.g., p. 43), and at the end he abandons pretence and frankly chops up his lines: but he never achieves the phrasing or flexibility which is the real *raison d'être* of this form of speech.

"The Translation of Nathaniel Bendersnap" is not a play (we may thank the 'nineties for that phrase) because it consists of three disjointed scenes with no emotional structure, and it is the formal relations of the emotions that make a thing dramatic. But it is the *jeu d'esprit* of a man of taste and a sense of humour, and his scene in hell is what many of us would wish heaven to be—a French eighteenth-century salon. Professor Winterbottom has just entered on a liaison with Manon Lescaut (temporary, because there is always that ubiquitous des Grieux), and the reception, the levée, is being attended by Ninon de l'Enclos, Madame de Brinvilliers, Voltaire, Casanova, Diderot, La Rochefoucauld, Byron, Horace Walpole, and Samuel Butler ("Erewhon" Butler, one supposes, not the great one)—and the only unhappy people are Madame Bovary and La Dame aux Camélias, who are not distinguished enough in their own lines to be included in the about-to-be-compiled "Gotha" of those regions. This is just, it is lively, but it is not an "imitation," because it has no internal organization of its own that can make it live.

Mr. O'Casey is concerned with human nature in Dublin tenements. His plays begin as comedies, if, as Schlegel believed, comedy represents the conquest of the beast in man over the divine, but they do not make life spin along more briskly. You can imitate human nature through the medium of perfectly ordinary people if you show some general influence working through them and illuminating life; Chekhov did so. You can do so if you show that within these ordinary people there is a spark of something emotive or terrible; Ibsen and Strindberg did so: but Mr. O'Casey's atmosphere is as dingy as a play by Monsieur Lenormand. A dreary carbon copy is not a just and lively imitation. Then, suddenly, at the end, Mr. O'Casey introduces a "misfortune" to a girl, an "execution" by Black-and-Tans or Irregulars, and expects something to happen in us. Nothing does happen, because somehow the relation is all wrong, and of rather less significance than a crime paragraph in a Sunday paper. George Lillo has a lot to answer for.

Mr. Phillpotts's play is extremely interesting. The story is taken from a page of Gibbon, and concerns the marriage of the Empress Eudocia with Romanus at Constantinople, 1067 A.D. It is a just imitation of human nature understood by a mature, reasoning, and sensitive mind. It is an imitation proper because it exists by itself; it has coherence and validity within itself. The relation of actions and emotions is satisfactory. Yet the play is a failure. Why?

It is not "lively," and the reasons for this are instructive, and lie, it appears to me, entirely in the language and phrasing. The diction is grave, dignified, scholarly; it never displeases, but the word never becomes flesh, it never lives and springs into being. The result is that in spite of the content of the words, nobody in the play ever seems to get excited, and an "imitation" of nature in miniature, such as a play is, must concentrate human nature. All through a play, whether comedy or tragedy, whether "Macbeth" or "Le Tartuffe," people must be animated. Its words must live and be racy, because "words are the most easily understood of all human gestures." (We must do Molière the justice to say that he had never heard of the Behaviourists.)

Mr. Phillpotts fails because he uses a slightly archaic diction which is intended to take us back to 1067. This is wrong. The playwright should bring the time to us, not take us to the time, as in "Coriolanus," as in "Cæsar and Cleopatra"; and this is possible because, as Racine remarked in a preface, "Le bon sens et la raison sont les mêmes dans tous les siècles." No doubt Mr. Phillpotts aimed at atmosphere. Now atmosphere has this in common with other trifles, such as love and happiness, and perhaps all the important things in the world: the faster you run after it the more it eludes you. It grows naturally out of—relations again. Count Lodovic bursts on to the stage and

cries "Banished!" Bellmour meets a friend, who says, "Vainlove, and abroad so early!" &c., and in both cases, at the very beginning of the play, you have atmosphere. It is not to be produced by an elaborate mechanism of foreboding words, unless, like Maeterlinck, you want to make your play all atmosphere—and then what becomes of your just and lively imitation? And since we are back to Dryden, it may, after all, be all his fault for beginning his masterpiece with:—

"Portents and prodigies are grown so frequent,  
That they have lost their name."

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

#### FICTION.

**The Nightingale.** By MARJORIE STRACHEY. (Longmans. 7s. 6d.)

**Sixty-Four, Ninety-Four** By R. H. MOTTRAM. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

**The Death of a Millionaire.** By G. D. H. and MARGARET COLE. (Collins. 7s. 6d.)

**Just Like Aunt Bertha.** By W. PETT RIDGE. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

Of its kind, "Sixty-Four, Ninety-Four!" is a good, but not a very good, book. It has conscientiousness, unobtrusiveness, sincerity—qualities which can be raised from the second to the first rank only by the addition of a quality of a different order, a transforming quality. And although, therefore, the book is well written, it is quite inadequate to its theme. It is written with the admirable aim of enforcing some of the lessons of the war. "That war is only tolerable, as a memory, when one can feel that someone learned something from it. Otherwise, it becomes a mere nightmare of Waste." But if anything is clear by now it is surely that the lesson of the war cannot be formulated; that lesson—if it exists—is too vast and profound, and it is still too near us. Mr. Mottram's—or anybody else's—intimidating picture of war is doomed thus to appear unimpressive to a generation which has still a lively remembrance of war's horrors. Moreover, war is so vast and horrible that it is beyond any single human impeachment. Mr. Mottram has been horrified, revolted, or enraged by so many different aspects of it that the lesson which he wishes to enforce is never clear. And his moderation of statement defeats itself. A more sensitive central figure would have made us feel the horror more keenly. But Geoffrey Skene is that peculiarly irritating type of modern Englishman who is at once intelligent and dull, sensitive and without sensibility, complex and uninteresting. Mr. Mottram has never pierced through the mask, and a more uninteresting mask it would be impossible to conceive.

That peace, too, can be very disagreeable "Just Like Aunt Bertha" vividly reminds us. No doubt Aunt Bertha's sponging friends provide her generosity with a magnificent opportunity, but surely even goodness can be carried too far; and Mr. Pett Ridge is punished for making almost all his characters sponges by having to make his heroine foolish. The book gives one the impression of a general injustice all round; and this makes it really disagreeable. Most of the characters in "The Idiot" are vile, and old Karamazov is a monster compared with Mr. Pett Ridge's knaves; yet, leaving aside literary comparisons, "The Brothers Karamazov" is more humanly pleasant than the present volume. Is it because the artist forgives evil in his characters, and that Mr. Pett Ridge cannot do so? The movement of the story is jerky and cinematographic. The humour, though Cockney, is without flavour. Surely this is one of the worst stories the author has ever written.

In "The Death of a Millionaire" the stock ingredients are cold-bloodedly mixed and the stock situations pitilessly worked out. In other words, it is a very good detective story. But it would have been still better if fresh ingredients had not been thrown in half way through.

Easily the most important of these four books is "The Nightingale," an imaginative reconstruction of the life of Chopin. The theme is one of the most difficult that could have been attempted. Over Chopin the whole world has been even more sentimental than it has been over Shelley, except when it has been sardonic out of revenge. Miss Strachey is neither sentimental nor sardonic. She makes us

believe in the romance of Chopin's life, thoughts, surroundings, and she does this without allowing herself a hint of romanticism. It is a legitimate artistic triumph. The first part of the book, describing Chopin's childhood and youth, is beautiful; his home life, the social life of Warsaw, his first memorable holiday in the country, when the melancholy Polish landscape made a first deep impression on him—these have a rare firmness and definition. The last part of the story, with its steady accumulation of pathos, is very moving. The interiors of George Sand's erratic and sordid household at Nohant are at once fastidiously and frankly described. George's daughter, Solange, is a very vivid portrait of the mischief-making, jealous girl, the kind of daughter which, one feels, mothers of genius are likely to have. George herself emerges as neither a prig nor a charlatan, but as a magnanimous and capable woman whose chief fault was that she did not know how to bring up her family. Her portrait is, on the whole, better than Chopin's. The composer's childhood and youth, which were almost unshadowed pleasure, and his last years, which were almost unrelieved pain, are admirable. The scenes of fashionable Parisian life, however, lack conviction. Here Miss Strachey's imaginative sympathy seems to have flagged, and she falls a victim to her manner; there is nothing behind the picture; the presentation lacks depth. But as a whole "The Nightingale" is a brilliant feat of interpretation. It is a beautifully conceived and finely executed work.

EDWIN MUIR.

#### THE CRITIC.

**The Critic's Armoury.** By CYRIL FALLS. (Cobden-Sanderson. 7s. 6d.)

**Bare Souls.** By GAMALIEL BRADFORD. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

EVERY critic, and nearly every author, has fairly clearly formulated in his mind his own theory of æsthetic. If he is more of a literary man than a philosopher it is probably simple; but not necessarily uninteresting or unoriginal. Probably it can be said that during their lives most authors could write one really interesting ten-thousand-word essay on the function of criticism.

It is only when they come to expand this essay into a weighty book—or, having written it once successfully, to repeat it and develop it as their minds change in details important to themselves but hardly noticeable to the outside world—that their work becomes a burden.

It is, accordingly, with some little trepidation that one sees a book entitled "The Critic's Armoury." It is, however, an extremely unpretentious work: only the first essay in it (and it is quite a short one) is devoted to the function of criticism; for the rest it is a collection of critical articles. Mr. Falls's modesty is most engaging. Very few critics have indulged in so little trumpet-blowing, so little attempt to "sell themselves," as the Americans put it. To a certain extent this modesty is justified. Not only does the book not claim to be epoch-making: it is not so. But it has considerable quiet merit: it exhibits a care and an erudition almost departed from the Muse of Criticism. Nowadays, when most books of so-called critical essays are simply a jumble of hastily written and unjustifiably reprinted book reviews from the daily Press, such as insult the very name of Essay, it is an extraordinary relief to find a book in which the author has obviously given a great deal of time and very considerable thought to the constituent articles.

Mr. Falls is generally well-informed and fair: qualities in which his modesty has stood him in good stead. He seems to have a curious repugnance against writing on subjects of which he knows nothing; and when he does take up some particular subject, such as hunting-authors, one soon sees that it is not because he thinks the subject a good one for a catchy article, but because he really knows something about it. Several of the essays are on French literature; and although (except for a wholly excellent one on Pascal) they do not seem quite so successful as the English ones, it is not that Mr. Falls's acquaintance with French literature is meagre, but perhaps rather owing to his un-Gallic disposition.

If one were to expect Mr. Gamaliel Bradford's book to be unpretentious or modest, the very title, "Bare Souls,"



would disabuse one; or the barbaric naivety of its dedication:—

TO  
BETTY HEISER  
Whose Grandmother read my soul bare  
and whose pranks and frolics  
distracted me from  
Bare Souls—

or such a sentence as this from the first page:—

"How to get at souls: the inner, hidden, mysterious machinery so cunningly and completely masked behind the solid compact covering of flesh and blood?"

When one reads further, one's first impression is amply justified. One soon finds that his style is noisy without having much meaning. He is sincere enough and sufficiently lacking in adventurous ability to avoid any very notable wrong-headedness: the only trouble is that he says nothing of any particular interest or moment from one cover to the other. To say that his criticism is elementary would be almost under-statement; and the invariable sureness with which he avoids ever going below the surface of his subject lends a peculiar piquancy to his title, and to his apparently sincere belief that he is really making a profound analysis of human psychology.

### "THE TIMES."

**Moberly Bell and His Times.** By F. HARCOURT KITCHIN. (Philip Allan. 12s. 6d.)

THIS is a book of such uncommon fascination to the newspaper man that he may be inclined to over-estimate its possible interest to those who are not journalists. Yet it is difficult to imagine that Mr. Kitchin's intimate revelations of life behind the sober red-brick front of Printing House Square, during a period of nearly twenty years, can fail to gratify the curiosity of a large public. From 1895 to 1909, Mr. Kitchin, who later became editor of the "Glasgow Herald," acted as chief assistant to Moberly Bell, the manager of the "Times." When Bell joined the staff in 1890, the "Thunderer" had fallen on evil days. The publication of the forged "Pigott Letters" and the costs of the Parnell Commission had shaken its prestige and emptied its coffers. Its circulation had seriously dwindled, and all attempts at reform were handicapped by its constitution, which involved a duality of partnership, vaguely overlapping. The Walter brothers were not actually the proprietors of the "Times." They owned the building and the printing plant; but the proprietorship of the paper—which implied merely the copyright or goodwill—was vested in a number of private hands. The Walters held a few of the shares; but their main interest was in the printing, and so long as they retained what they had come to regard as an inalienable contract, they were indisposed to trouble too much about the paper itself, or to introduce the modern machinery through lack of which, among other reasons, the "Times" was falling behind its competitors.

From 1890 until the day in April, 1911, when he fell dead from his office chair, Bell, who might have done far better for himself elsewhere, served the "Times" with single-hearted devotion, and waged a desperate fight for its soul no less than for its body. His judgment, perhaps, was not always equal to his zeal. Like the Walter brothers, he held that the "Times," if it was to maintain its tone, must necessarily appeal to a limited public; but he worked himself into the belief that no dignity was sacrificed when, by arrangement with Hooper and Jackson, those extremely modern American booksellers, the "Times" became the raucous vendor of the "Encyclopedia Britannica." The profits from this work made a fortune for Hooper and Jackson, who reaped the full reward of its immense popularity in America, and saved the "Times," which benefited only by the lesser English sales. The surplus money which Bell now had in hand was devoted to various schemes for increasing the circulation of the paper. Only one of these experiments, however—the "Times" Book Club—promised any solid success, and that was soon frustrated by the war which arose in the camp of the booksellers and publishers.

Then, while the future of the "Times" still remained uncertain, there came two bomb-shells. First, there was

the Chancery action of 1905, which necessitated the sale of the paper; and following that was the announcement—inserted in its pages without the knowledge of Bell or of Buckle, the editor—that Arthur Pearson was contemplating its purchase. Bell had small regard for Pearson's ability, and, resenting the secrecy with which the Walters had acted, he allowed himself to be drawn into private negotiations with Lord Northcliffe. Mr. Kitchin's account of the stealthy campaign by which Northcliffe outwitted Pearson—the most astonishing feature of which was his childlike trust in Bell's honesty—makes one of the most dramatic chapters of an engrossing book; and, in his later pages, Mr. Kitchin gives us an intimate revelation of Northcliffe's strangely wayward and contradictory personality. The sum paid for the "Times" was £320,000. Had it been known who the actual purchaser was, and that he had set his heart upon buying at any price, the figure might have been a very different one. Having acquired the paper, Northcliffe fulfilled for a time his promise to maintain its traditions; but the manner in which he violated that pledge in later years is common knowledge. Moberly Bell died at a moment when the soul of the "Times" seemed to have been lost, and it is to be deeply regretted that he did not live to see the resurrection of 1923.

### A GERMAN IN FRANCE.

**The Letters of Madame: Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, Princess Palatine, Duchess of Orleans.** Translated and Edited by Mrs. G. SCOTT STEVENSON. Vol. II., 1709-1722. (Arrowsmith. 18s.)

THIS is the second volume of Madame's selected Correspondence, of which Vol. I. has already been noticed in this journal. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Scott Stevenson for having undertaken a difficult piece of work. Madame wrote alternatively in French and German, and no reputable edition of her correspondence exists. These two volumes are probably the best collection of her writings extant. Still, grateful as we must feel for what we have got, we might wish the selection somewhat other than it is. Admittedly, it would have been unpractical to have published the complete letters; but it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that many omissions are due to the fact that the passages omitted are too interesting, not that they are not interesting enough.

The key to Madame's character is that she was a German, and always saw France with German eyes. When she came to Versailles, as the second wife of Monsieur, the effeminate younger brother of Louis XIV., she had no illusions. Monsieur's first wife, Henrietta of England, had just died under highly suspicious circumstances, and it was quite on the cards that Elizabeth Charlotte would meet with the same fate. She knew quite well that she was ugly, and that even if she had been beautiful she would have had no luck with her husband. Furthermore, she resisted all the prevailing glamour about France. She remained a good German, and speaks with withering scorn about those Germans who preferred talking French to their own language. Right to the end of her life she remained impenitent in one important particular:—

"Paris, May 3rd, 1721.

"With regard to eating and drinking, I am entirely German as I have been all my life. They cannot make good pastry here. Milk and butter are not as good here as they are with us, and are tasteless and watery, nor are the cabbages as good, as the soil is not rich. It is light and sandy, with the result that the vegetables have no flavour and the cattle cannot give good milk. Dear God, how I should love to be able to eat the dishes which your cook makes for you! They would be more to my taste than anything my steward prepares for me."

Still, despite her husband and the cooking, Madame could be thankful for small mercies. She was, on the whole, happy in her son, the "infamous" regent, who was always affectionate, and knew how to keep her amused. In fact, she regretted his regency, which prevented his seeing her regularly. Though sharp-witted, she is not entirely a trustworthy guide to the period. Her hatred of Mme. de Maintenon amounted to an obsession, and vitiates her judgment, making her attribute to that clever but home-keeping old woman much that was really due to the spirit

of the age. In fact, the most interesting impression carried away from this volume is that of the change from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. Madame frankly deplored it:—

"In the days of the Queen and the first Dauphiness there was nothing but modest and dignified behaviour at Court. Those who were debauched in secret practised restraint in public, but when the old bawd set herself to govern and brought all the bastards into the royal household everything became just the opposite."

But what Madame really disliked was not the debauchery, but the breaking down of etiquette and the taste for privacy and freedom which came in with the eighteenth century:—

"Would to God that the late King was still alive, because I had more pleasure and happiness in one day than I have had during the six years of my son's regency. There was a real Court then, and not this middle-class life, to which I cannot get accustomed—I who was brought up at a Court and have spent all my life in one."

Such a book as this must consist of uncorrelated snippets, which are impossible to group into a review, but enemies of the pompous view of history will be glad of the following description of Saint François de Sales:—

"Saint François de Sales, who founded the order of the Daughters of Mary, was friendly in his youth with the Maréchal de Villeroy, father of the present Marshal. The Marshal could never get used to calling him by the name of Saint, and when people mentioned his name to him he used to say:—

"I was delighted when I saw that Monsieur de Sales had been made a Saint: he used to be so fond of telling dirty stories and cheating at cards. Except for that he is one of the best fellows in the world, although one of the stupidest."

And here is a delightfully human trait:—

"The Landgrave did well to buy back that Indian prince and princess of whom you speak and send them back again to their own country, but you must know that amongst the savages of America there are neither princes nor nobles, all are equal; they recognize only chiefs who lead them in war, and whom they cease to obey as soon as the war is finished. I know all about the savages, because I have a chambermaid who married a Frenchman, whose property was in Canada and who spent many years there. She has made me thoroughly conversant with all the customs of the people in that country, and no ship's captain could have anything to teach me."

Altogether a delightfully high-spirited, sensible, and intelligent woman, who, in spite of her personal dislikes, tells us any amount of good stories about the French Court under Louis XIV. and the regent.

#### "GONE ABROAD."

**Gone Abroad.** By DOUGLAS GOLDRING. (Chapman & Hall. 12s. 6d.)

THIS book is an admirable illustration of the truth that the greatest catastrophes in life produce their own blessings. If the depreciation of the pound has lowered the standard of life in England below what is tolerable, it is now possible to live in its appreciation in most of the obscurer parts of Europe, and this chance of war is doing its share to restore English youth to sanity. Once such travel was a slight eccentricity of the moderately wealthy: now it has become a necessity; and England will become a place that only one's parents have visited, and one's children hope to see, at an advanced age, as the reward of a life devoted to gaining a fortune.

Mr. Goldring decided to try if life in the Balearic Islands and the Ligurian Coast would provide some months' food, exploring, bathing, dancing, and drinks at a cost which, in London, would have allowed for half the food and none of the fun. It did, and furnished the material for a sensitive, intelligent book, about everything and nothing. About the bad café at Dianio Marino people will go to out of snobbism, when there is an admirable one a few doors away. About Puerto de Pollensa, where there is no law, and everyone is much better without it. About several places to be avoided because our aunts have got there before us. About Italian prudery, erotics, hospitality, and art.

A book of this kind has room for digressions. A local library which was unable to supply him with a detective story in any known language leads him to a protest, written

with anger and wit, that lately our best writers of adventure stories should have been pressed into the service of Tory propaganda. This is true, and it is a bad sign of the age that writers, like Colonel Buchan and "Sapper," of our popular heroic romances should point their work with naive approval of the least intelligent forms of reactionary prejudice.

This chapter, which ends in a vignette of a revolution at which Mr. Goldring was present, is written with a passion that perhaps overweighs the book. It falls like a black curtain across the brilliant countryside and the silly adventures. The story of a friend's Provençal farm that follows is spirited enough, but, if a book were an endless film, one would feel it running now into a pattern of tragic events. After Provence there is a startling chapter. It has nothing to do with the book. It is called "Arthur and Edward," and is a short story, flung in on the excuse that it happened at Cannes. Two men, greatly attached to one another, are drinking themselves to death in a series of bars, and one of them dies. In the way it is told, it is perfectly told, and remains unforgettable.

#### JUSTIFICATIONS.

**The Case for the Central Powers.** By MAX MONTGELAS. (Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.)

**Fighting the World.** By MICHAEL KAROLYI. (Kegan Paul. 21s.)

THE question of responsibility for the European War is one for historians. It has little practical bearing on the problems of the present day. Except in the matter of reparations—a problem which will solve itself in time by demonstrating its own insolubility—any revisions of the Peace Treaties will be made because the present settlement is unjust to the people directly concerned, and not because the world wishes to make amends for having misjudged the Central Powers. The whole contention that revision would follow automatically from the proof that they were innocent, or even less guilty than the Entente, is based on a misconception.

To the historian, however, a reasoned statement of the case for Germany and her allies is a valuable document. Such a statement has been drawn up by Count Max Montgelas, who was joint editor with Karl Kautsky and Professor Schücking of the German documents relating to the outbreak of the war. Propaganda, of course, it is, in the sense that the author is out to amass all the arguments on one side; but it is refreshingly dispassionate. It begins with a study of the seven years preceding the war, and an analysis of the position as regards armaments of all the Powers on both sides. This occupies about half the book, while the rest is taken up with a detailed account of the events leading from the Sarajevo murder to the declarations of war. The arguments which carry most weight are those based on policy and on diplomatic correspondence. Those which rest on the fact that Russia was the first to mobilize only help to show the impossibility of fixing the guilt of aggression by the order in which military measures are taken.

Count Montgelas has advanced rather more than all the available points in support of his case. It is legitimate to argue anything you like from what the Kaiser did say; but arguments from what he did not say, but undoubtedly would have said had he wished for war, can never be entirely convincing. After all, to prove that Germany was not wholly responsible for the war it is not necessary to establish her complete innocence. The world is practically agreed now that neither side was altogether blameless.

"The Case for the Central Powers" is a justification of Germany, for Austria-Hungary does not come out of it too well. "Fighting the World" is a justification of the policy which Count Michael Karolyi and a few followers pursued in Hungary during the war. If Count Montgelas pleases by his detachment, Count Karolyi delights by the personality which shows through every sentence of his narrative. Karolyi was the Mirabeau of the Hungarian Revolution; an aristocrat by birth and temperament, a revolutionary by passionate conviction from the days when, at the age of about twenty, he read Karl Marx. One is tempted to review his book as if it were a novel, so many picturesque incidents does it contain.





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He stood for a policy so enlightened that it was almost doomed to failure. At home he advocated universal franchise with the secret ballot, and agrarian reform; abroad, a denunciation of Dualism and the German alliance, and the conclusion of a separate peace by Hungary. Later, under the influence of Oreas Jaszi, he advocated the reorganization of Hungary on a federal basis on the same lines as Switzerland. His difficulty was to find allies who would support both points of his programme. The franchise policy had fair prospects of success till Andrassy and Vaszyoni quite unnecessarily gave away the position by an agreement to limit the suffrage to those who could read and write, and to limit the secret ballot to the towns. The peace policy would never have been carried.

Count Karolyi's theory that Socialism is the only way to international peace is of the nature of a religious belief. He hardly attempts to argue it, and will convince no one who does not already share his view. His principles resemble a religious creed, too, in the modified form in which they were put into practice. The Karolyi Government came into power with a programme to which no Left-wing Liberal could take exception. But the fervour with which he expounds his theories is one of the most attractive characteristics which the book reveals.

Like all moderate revolutionaries, he ended by satisfying no one. The aristocracy hated him as a traitor to his class, and his own party turned against him because he did not move fast enough. In "Fighting the World" he only tells his story up to the revolution of October, 1918, which made him Premier. He is continually impatient, even in retrospect, at the stupidity of the Tisza party and the lukewarmness of those of his friends who hesitated to identify themselves completely with his policy; but he writes of them with none of the violence which so often pervades the memoirs of unsuccessful statesmen. The personalities whom he describes are not rigidly and unconsciously divided into sheep and goats. They live as vividly as the author himself, and all but one or two are treated with perfect fairness.

## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

THERE has been a sudden rush, after some rather dull weeks, of interesting books on to the Editor's table. In literature there is a fine reprint of "England's Helicon, 1600," in the "Haslewood Books" (Etchells & Macdonald. One guinea). "The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson" is published in one volume, with an introduction by Martha Dickinson Bianchi (Secker. 21s.). Then in criticism and essays there is "The Novels of Fielding," by Aurélien Digeon, a French critic (Routledge. 10s. 6d.); "Eighteenth-Century Studies" by Robert Bracey (Oxford: Blackwell. 5s.), a series of studies of Dr. Johnson, Boswell, and some minor characters; "Ralph Waldo Emerson," a critical biography by Dr. Denton J. Snider, the American (Selwyn & Blount. 5s.).

In autobiography "Things that Happened," by Vereker Hamilton (Macmillan. 16s.), will interest many readers; Sir Squire Bancroft looks back over a long life in "Empty Chairs" (Murray. 10s. 6d.); in "Live and Learn" (Hodder & Stoughton. 5s.) the late Sir James Yoxall is practically philosophic as well as autobiographic.

"An Old Man's Jottings," by Joseph Rickaby, S.J. (Longmans. 10s. 6d.), contains reflections chiefly on morals and religion.

There are several books on music which deserve mention: "The Term's Music," by C. H. Glover (Kegan Paul. 4s. 6d.), contains essays on the music of the great composers originally written for use in the Parents' Union School; "The Physical Basis of Piano Touch and Tone," by Otto Ortmann (Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.), deals with the problem of the relationship between touch and tone, and is the result of long experiments in the laboratory; "The Opera," by R. A. Streatfeild, new edition revised and enlarged by Edward J. Dent (Routledge. 8s. 6d.), has been brought up to date, and now includes all operas worth notice down to the present day.

"Sporting Days in Wild Norway," by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen (Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d.), contains travel

and sporting reminiscences of the famous explorer. "In Mexican Waters," by George Hugh Banning (Hopkinson. 18s.), is a travel book above the average, containing some magnificent photographs. "Moorland Mysteries," by J. K. Bateson (Jenkins. 10s. 6d.), is a pleasant book dealing with Dartmoor.

In "Turkey in Travail," by Harold Armstrong (Lane. 8s. 6d.), the late Acting Military Attaché to the High Commissioner, Constantinople, deals with the birth of the new Turkey. A larger and more formidable work on the same subject is "Modern Turkey," by E. G. Mears (Macmillan. 25s.), which deals with the political and economic history of Turkey from 1908 to 1923.

## NOVELS IN BRIEF

**Anna's.** By C. NINA BOYLE. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

Anna, who manages the rough, hard-drinking customers of the Devil's Throat Inn, at the small picturesque Devon port, and, in that piratical atmosphere, keeps the old cunning Uncle and Captain Kidd, the pet goat, in their respective places, is a fine, stolid character, comely, mysterious in her very womanliness, on near acquaintance. How the violent and low fortunes of the drinking-house become involved with those of the stately landed families, Le Telleurs, who, sacrificing themselves to honour, search for the missing heir to the estates, and how, smiling in the background, the enigmatic Anna pulls, through the hidden past, with matriarchal power, the strings of wealthy destinies, is told finely, with a sense of character, humour, and adventure. Arthur, the dilettante, the bluff Admiral George, the crude impostor, and the rest are more real than the usual characters in an adventure tale. We can only complain of the disposal of the corpse of the murdered heir; its originality, which the publishers stress, hardly justifies the unpleasantness of the method.

**Miss Phipps.** By KATHARINE TYNAN. (Ward & Lock. 7s. 6d.)

The middle-aged spinster who, deliberately or unconsciously, exercises on others an evil power, intensified by unnatural repression of good instincts, has become a popular figure in recent serious fiction. Mrs. Katharine Tynan-Hinkson, in a novel that has unaccustomed action and vigour of characterization, with the familiar charm, which she can repeat so well by heart, treats the theme with fine realism. Miss Phipps, the nurse of Christopher Talbot, who has been shattered in health by the War, rules the invalid by whim and weakness. Small, timid, pathetically faded in prettiness, she thrives on the illness of others, keeps her victims by encouraging their hypochondriacal tendencies, and literally kills them by kindness. Despite necessary exaggeration, we can recognize the type. Delia Sarsfield, the lovely Irish heroine, who arrives from a German convent, *vid* several romantic adventures, at her guardian's home in Westmorland, is comparatively commonplace, though by youth and pushing vitality she routs the elder woman through a metaphorical process of fresh air.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**This for Remembrance.** By BERNARD, LORD COLERIDGE. (Fisher Unwin. 15s.)

It is strange to remember how many distinguished lawyers have the blood of the unpunctual and unpractical poet in their veins. Marks of their relationship are indeed to be traced. Gentle, formal, courteous, fond of nature, music, and poetry—the characteristics which Lord Coleridge discerns in his grandfather, Sir John Duke Coleridge, seem more fitted for the man of letters than the lawyer; and have descended, to judge by this modest and simple volume, to his grandson. Far from thrusting his personality upon us, as he accuses himself of doing, he is almost too reticent to win our full attention. He seems to prefer to speak of his grandfather rather than of himself; to eulogize the merits of the past rather than to make any definite claim for the present. The narrative, much of which is devoted to extracts from his grandfather's diaries, tends to shrink into a succession of little notes upon famous cases, anecdotes, and reflections, which allow the writer to steal away into congenial shades of his library and give us very little chance of seeing him face to face.







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### THE WEEK IN THE CITY

HARLAND & WOLFF—DEFAULTING STATES—TILLINGS.

THE directors of Harland & Wolff, Ltd., have issued the long-awaited report and balance sheet, but in place of a profit and loss account they circulate two illustrated booklets about their own works and the steelworks of Messrs. David Colville & Sons, in which they own a controlling interest. The balance sheet is regrettably uninformative and justifies the criticisms we have voiced regarding this company, which issued last year £4,000,000 of First Preference shares on an egregiously secretive prospectus. Taking the outstanding features, the balance sheet shows an item of £241,538 for "balance for period ended December 31st, 1924, after providing for Preference dividends paid and accrued to December 31st, 1924, and including transfer from reserve, and a balance of £3,228 14s. 3d. brought forward from last year." This item as it reads is almost unintelligible. The "period" is presumably for eighteen months, although that is not mentioned, as the accounts of Harland & Wolff in previous years were made up to June 30th. The preference dividends paid are in respect of the 4,000,000 6 per cent. First Cumulative shares issued last July, the 3,095,094 "A" Cumulative Preference shares, and the 20,300 "B" Preference shares, and the directors, after paying an interim dividend of 2½ per cent. on the ordinary shares, propose to pay a final of 2½ per cent., without saying whether it is in respect of twelve or eighteen months. The amount included as transferred from reserve is not stated, but as the reserve account now stands at £1,300,000 instead of the £1,500,000 given in the prospectus last July, we may infer that the transfer is £200,000. This transfer was made to cover losses on vessels the building of which was undertaken "at unremunerative prices" in order to provide work for the men. The balance of profit was arrived at after writing off the sum of £107,913 for depreciation, an amount which is less than 1 per cent. of the fixed assets. The auditors, Messrs. Price, Waterhouse, passed the accounts "subject to the sufficiency of the provision for depreciation," which seems to indicate that they regard the provision for depreciation as insufficient. There is a huge item not brought into the balance sheet of £8,830,570, representing "contingent liabilities in respect of bills discounted," which does not improve the appearance of things and calls for succinct explanation. There is also an amount of £1,293,344 Trade Facilities Act advances repayable (commencing in 1928), and an amount of £727,301 "at credit of controlled companies." The directors' report has a good deal to say about the importance of Harland & Wolff as shipbuilders and engine constructors owning steel works and collieries of vast size, but, as a financial contemporary has pointed out, if work has had to be undertaken to keep labour together on terms that have proved unremunerative, the fact that the company was again at the head of the list of tonnage with an output of 105,389 gross registered tons, is a matter upon which its workmen are to be congratulated more than the shareholders. The secretiveness of the accounts is not compensated for by the expressions of opinion on the future of the Diesel engine *versus* steam, with which the directors' report is so largely concerned. For all we know, Harland & Wolff may not have done so badly as was feared, but it is regrettable that the accounts of such a vast undertaking, having regard to the fact that the public has no previous balance sheet wherewith to make comparisons, should have been presented with a singular lack of intelligibility. The 6 per cent. First Preference shares have fallen to about 14s.

The fifty-first annual report of the Council of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders which has just been issued ends with a summary of defaulting States, which is always useful reading. Readers of THE NATION who have been interested in the discussion of home *versus*

foreign investments may be interested to see it in detail:—

	Principal Outstanding. £	Interest Arrears. £
Russia	1,746,274,182	578,874,276
Ecuador	2,344,749	1,370,092
Honduras	5,398,570	24,179,569
Mexico	3,925,000	2,499,750
Provincial and Municipal Loans:		
Argentina—Province of Corrientes	297,520	107,107
Brazil—		
State of Alagoas	258,420	19,382
State of Para	2,866,820	477,929
City of Bahia	582,800	197,423
City of Para (Nelem)	1,936,000	447,869
City of Manaus	269,800	118,712
Mexico—		
State of San Luis Potosi	187,300	123,618
United States (Southern States)	12,000,000	*36,000,000
Former Confederate States	2,418,800	10,074,302
	£1,778,769,961	£654,490,029

\*Estimated.

It has been pointed out before that an investor in Foreign Government securities has no legal redress whatsoever in the event of the Government defaulting in its interest payments or in sinking fund payments. His only recourse, other than diplomatic pressure, is to the good offices of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders. Some idea of the usefulness of that body may be gauged from the fact that it claims to have been concerned since its foundation in 1868 in the settlement of debts aggregating £1,000,000,000. Reviewing the past year, the Council points out some of the worst features, prominent among these being the suspension of payments by the Egyptian Government on account of the loans secured on the Tribute to Turkey. To the list of defaulting States "it is indeed surprising," write the Council, "that the names of eight of the United States of America, viz., Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, have to be added. These States have not only defaulted on their obligations, but some of them have inserted clauses in their Constitutions forbidding their recognition. Their Debts were not contracted for war purposes, but for industrial enterprises."

The accounts now published of Thomas Tilling, Ltd., the well-known road-transport company, for the year ending December, 1924, are a strange commentary on the "bear" announcement which the directors thought fit to make before the year had closed. Tilling shares last November had shown great liveliness, rising from about 48s. to about 55s., on the supposition that the dividend for 1923 (15 per cent. plus bonus of 5 per cent.) would be maintained or bettered. The rise, apparently, was not acceptable to the directors, who did not wait for the accounts to be closed before announcing that a smaller dividend would be paid. The shares naturally slumped badly. The accounts, in fact, show only a slightly lower profit, and it is clear that a much larger dividend could have been paid than the 7½ final, making 15 per cent. for the year, which the directors proposed. If we take the net profits before the interest on debentures is deducted, we arrive at the following result: 1922, £154,016 (div. 15 per cent.); 1923, £155,445 (15 per cent., plus bonus of 5 per cent., plus special bonus of 25 per cent., tax free); 1924, £148,572 (div. 15 per cent.). It appears that the company had sufficient to pay more than 30 per cent. on its £308,848 Ordinary shares, but the directors have taken the more conservative course of paying 15 per cent. and appropriating £52,271 to "special reserve for properties, investments, &c., and £5,000 to retiring staff benefit account," leaving £57,477 to be carried forward. The financial position of the company is exceptionally strong, and the ordinary shares at 47s. 6d. cum dividend of 1s. 6d. seem reasonably priced.



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